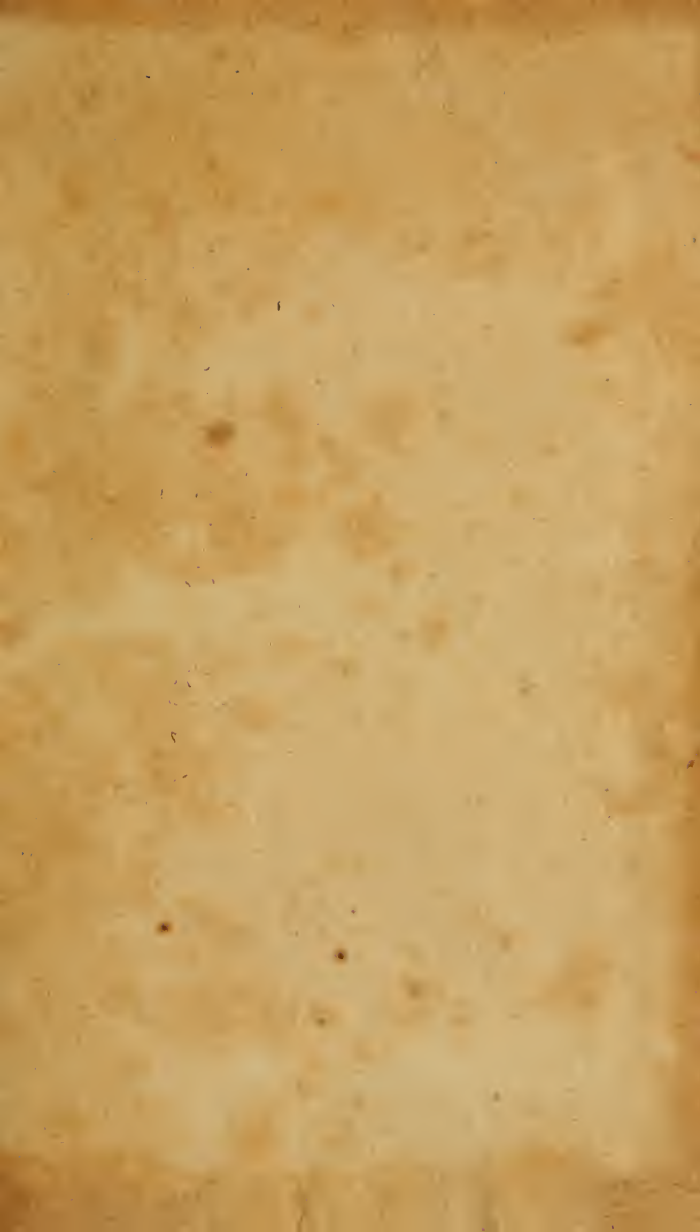


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Lacy Roberson 1825-

THE
BAPTISM OF CHRIST
A
GOSPEL ORDINANCE:
BEING ALTOGETHER
INWARD AND SPIRITUAL:

BY JOB SCOTT.

Baltimore :

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.....
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PREFACE.

THIS little treatise, reader, is written chiefly for the help and information of such as are in a state of honest enquiry, and who have not yet seen clearly beyond some of those former observances, which at the very best were but preparatory, and pointing to *him*, and *his* work on the soul, in *whom* they all *end*, and are done away forever; but partly for the confirmation and establishment of such as have been already convinced of the unshadowy dispensation of the gospel.

I have long seen with sorrow, that many sincere souls are much detained from the *substance*, by undue attachments to the *sign*. I have once known and groaned under this bondage and entanglement myself; for though I was never a partaker in any of those outward ordinances, yet I was divers years blinded in my understanding, through the vail that was over me. In reading the accounts of baptism in the New Testament, I could not understand why the Apostles used *water*, especially after Christ's resurrection, if it was not *Christ's baptism*; nor how *men* could possibly baptize with the Holy Ghost; and there-

fore finding *men* commanded to *baptize*, and that they *did* baptize with *water*, I concluded, very ignorantly, that water was commanded by Christ. — This conclusion, I have since seen, was the natural result of inexperience, in an anxious investigation of things not known by mere human wisdom, or creaturely abilities, but only spiritually discerned; and as my mind was sincerely engaged to see for myself, and avoid all deception, it pleased him who has the key of David, (after I had passed several years of doubt and hesitation, some times concluding I should, before long, be baptized in water, and then struck with an inward and feeling conviction of its utter insufficiency towards effecting the renovation and cleansing which my soul at times longed for) to open my understanding, *chiefly* by his own internal operations and illuminations in my enquiring mind, without much of any instrumental means, either reading or hearing; so that I saw clearly, (which I had too long been very dull in believing, and fearful in receiving) that Christ himself in spirit had long time been striving with me, moving in me, wooing, calling, knocking, checking, restraining, constraining, and powerfully impressing my mind; but I knew him not, and in that *inward* and *immediate way* sought not after him. When, alas! had I but *known the gift of God*, and *who* it was that inwardly *talked* with me, I might have asked of him, and received the *living water* of his heavenly kingdom; as afterwards I did, to the full satisfaction of my thirsty soul. And when this became my joyful experience, wherein the beloved of my soul met with me, as with many others, in the garden, saying, “eat,

O friends—drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved,” Cant. v. i. I became perfectly satisfied that outward *bread, wine and water*, were no part of the *baptism or supper* of the Lord, nor any way necessary to his anointed, in things pertaining to salvation.—It was not very long after this, before I not only *believed*, but *knew*, by most consolatory experience, that men, even in our day, though helpless of themselves, are through divine assistance enabled instrumentally, in a very powerful and heart-watering manner, to baptize with the Holy Ghost. For being now engaged *to feel after God*, if happily I might from time to time renewedly find him, he was not only pleased in these my silent approaches, in religious meetings, and more retired waitings, to arise in me immediately, with the brightness of a morning without clouds, and powerfully to manifest himself to me and *in me*, as a fountain of living waters; but was also graciously pleased to send among us, of his servants, such as were well qualified to do the work of evangelists, and who being largely acquainted with the soul-saving baptism of Christ *in themselves*, were so filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake so demonstratively, in the life, evidence and divine virtue and vigour of it, that it was like the oil poured on Aaron’s head, which ran down to the very skirts of his garment—it even reached, overflowed and filled *my* poor soul.

Much I could write respecting these blessed days of my espousals, but enlargement here may be improper; I shall therefore just say, that had I not felt living desires that others may come to a

full participation of the same blessed experience, and that none may be longer unprofitably amused and detained, by lifeless signs and symbols, from the all-sufficient substance, thou, reader, hadst never heard from me in this way.—I know many find their interest in keeping up a shew in these things, and representing them of exceeding great importance.—I have no doubt many very sincerely urge them upon their friends and acquaintance, as believing them injunctions of the gospel; but I am also sadly sensible that too many “seek their gain from their quarter,” and obtain it, by keeping up a lifeless round of prayers, preaching, singing, eating, drinking, dipping, sprinkling, &c. and am convinced beyond scruple, that the *manimon of unrighteousness*, this way increased, is a powerful obstruction to the coming of the kingdom of our Lord, in life and power, unclouded and uneclipsed by the retention of vailing and darkening observances.—Babylon is not yet so fallen, as to rise no more: she is still lurking in a mystery.—She is still *mystery* Babylon the great, and still the mother of many harlots—thousands are ensnared among some or other of her daughters, and are not aware of her cup.—May the Lord graciously preserve the honest-hearted, of every denomination, from the harmful influences of all her many and artful sorceries, and keep alive their hunger and thirst after true righteousness.—I have no doubt but that, if I am finally so happy as to reign in life by Jesus Christ, my only hope and Saviour, I shall be there accompanied by thousands, who have through their whole lives lived under the *vail*, as to outward ordinances; but who, having

in great sincerity, done what they believed was their duty, in singleness as unto God, and not unto men, are, and finally will be, well accepted of him, who seeth not as man seeth, but looks through all outside things to the heart. And yet, on the contrary, I do firmly believe many, who have began and ran well for a season, have been by degrees, as outward things have become more and more considerable with them, drawn more and more from the true hunger, and been more and more easy and satisfied with little or nothing of the true bread, water and wine, of the kingdom, till at length they have centered in formality, and sat down in a rest short of the soul's salvation.—That thou mayest shun this dangerous rock, dear reader, and be preserved living and growing in the holy root of divine life, to the end of thy stay here, and finally admitted to the joys of the blessed, forever to adore and bless the God of all grace and true consolation, is the prayer of thy sincere friend, and willing servant in the labour and travail of the gospel,

THE AUTHOR.

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the above named subject. I am sorry to hear that you are not satisfied with the result of the examination. I have, however, no objection to your making such use of the facts as you may think proper. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours truly,
J. M. Smith

THE
BAPTISM OF CHRIST
A
GOSPEL ORDINANCE :
BEING ALTOGETHER
INWARD AND SPIRITUAL :

Not, like *John's*, *into Water* ; but, according to the real Nature of the Gospel, *into* the very *Name, Life and Power*, of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.

Shewing that the Apostles' Use of Water Baptism was by no Means as an ordinance of CHRIST, but as the Baptism of *John* ; and that all who are baptized *into* CHRIST, have put on CHRIST, not only professionally, but substantially—that is, have put him on as the whole Armour of Light, and walk in him in Newness of Life.

CHAPTER I.

Of the regular order and succession of divine dispensations. Signs and figures pointed at life and substance. Hence Christ deferred his gospel ministry, till John's course in a baptism, but figurative of his own, was fulfilled. John's baptism and Christ's are type and antitype. Christ sent his disciples to baptize with his own *baptism*. So breathes on them the Holy Ghost. Great wisdom even in the *timing* our Lord's baptism by John, also in his answer to John. John preached the kingdom but at hand. In its nature and fulness, it is *after*, not *before*, nor joined with the type. John prepared the way. Some took the kingdom by force. All types end in the antitype. Christ's baptism cleanses thoroughly, as John's was total immersion. A picture, as truly a man, as water baptism Christ's. A single eye full of light, and then the shadow is behind us. Christ was baptized in water, not to continue, but fulfil that *decreasing* sign; and so to make way for the *increasing* substance. He also *ate*, and thus fulfilled the passover.

IT is very observable, that our Lord Jesus Christ deferred the open and express promulgation of the gospel of the kingdom till John the Baptist, his immediate forerunner, had *fulfilled his course*; and that not *before*, but after John had finished his *preparatory* ministration, ceased the *voice* crying in the wilderness, prepare, &c. quite ended his own *decreasing* work in that outward elementary baptism, which as a *sign* was to *precede* and *prepare* the way for Christ's, and was shut up in prison; *he*, the Lord of life and

glory, the *end* and *ender* of all typical dispensations, immediately entered upon the publication of the *gospel word*; the *new*, the *encreasing* and ever continuing dispensation of life, substance and salvation. For we read, Mat. iv. 12, "now when Jesus had *heard* that John was cast into prison, he departed into *Galilee*." And, verse 17, "from *that time* Jesus *began* to preach, and to say, repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This *kingdom*, now so near at hand, and which John had just before proclaimed to be so, was and is *inward* and *spiritual*; for our Lord himself declares, "the kingdom of God is *within you*." Luke xvii. 21. And it is clear that he waited for John's *course* to be first *fulfilled*, before he ever *began* publicly to preach it. See also Mark i. 14, 15. "Now *after* that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God; and saying, the *time is fulfilled*, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." The gospel is not *sign* or *figure*, but *life* and *substance*, the "power of God to salvation," free from all types and shadows, being the *last* and *lasting* dispensation; and which was not to commence in its general fulness, till *after* all others. Christ is often spoken of as coming *after* John; and John, as going, or coming, or being sent *before* Christ; and therefore as John's *course* in the very last of the *shadows*, water baptism, was now *completed*, the great minister of the sanctuary very pertinently, at the very *beginning* of his own gospel preaching, proclaimed, *the time is fulfilled*. I know not what words he could

have used more proper and significant to introduce the glorious gospel, and teach mankind that all *signs* were to *end* in the *substance*. And from a sincere wish for the real good and solid information of mankind, I desire this one word, *fulfilled*, in this and divers other places, may be specially noticed, and deeply considered. It is of *vast* importance.

And why did Jesus *wait* till John's *course* was *fulfilled*? why, then, immediately on *hearing* of his imprisonment, did he *begin* to preach the gospel of the kingdom as then *just at hand*? and why was he so careful, at his very entrance on this great work, to make this special declaration, "*the time is fulfilled*?" There is deep instruction in it all. He knew the *times* and seasons, though many who could *discern the face of the sky*, and had understanding in the forebodings of change in regard to the weather, were and are ignorant of the *signs of the times*; and through this ignorance many did, and many still do, retain the shadow *out* of all proper *season*. But Christ, as he *knew*, so he carefully *observed* the right *time*. He would have all things pertaining to *his kingdom*, especially *his own* immediate transactions, take place in their proper seasons. He would not hasten his first great miracle in Cana, of turning water into wine, even though his own mother solicitously prompted him to that glorious exertion of his divinity.—He would not go up to the *feast*, till the right time. So neither would he *begin* his own public ministration (which was for the ending of all

shadows, the abolition and blotting out the handwriting of ordinances) till John's (which was much in the shadow) was fulfilled. "The law and the prophets prophesied until John." John was himself both a prophet and under the law, yet *he* and his *ministration* were until Christ. He coming *after* the *rest* of the *prophets*, being sent immediately *before* the *face* of the *Lord*, and to *prepare his way*, in no wise hindered his being a *prophet himself*. Christ testifies, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater, Mat. xi. 11. He also says, Mat. v. 17, 18, "think not that I am come to destroy the *law* or the *prophets*; I am not come to *destroy*, but to *fulfil*; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be *fulfilled*." Here we see he came to *fulfil* both the *law*, and the predictions of the *prophets*. Accordingly we read of divers things said to be done, that it *might be fulfilled* which was spoken by the prophets or spoken aforetime. Hence, though John came after the others, and as it were reached from *them* to *Christ*, yet he too came *under the law*, and was one among the *prophets*, which Christ came not to destroy, but whose predictions and fore-running dispensations he came to *fulfil*. John's prophetic declaration was eminently pertinent, in regard to the great work of Christ in gospel *baptism*, the sanctification of souls; and so was his *figurative immersion*; and Christ, in his saving *baptism*, amply *fulfils* both the prophecy and the *sign*. Christ was "made under the law" himself, Gal. iv. 4; then surely so was *John*. And seeing John's watery mi-

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nistration was to *prepare* Christ's way, and lead to his *saving baptism*; Christ having thus carefully deferred his *own* public ministration till *John's* was *fulfilled*, as soon as this was done, and John cast into prison, the right time being now exactly arrived, he went forthwith, on *hearing* of John's imprisonment, into *Galilee*; and *there* and "from that time *began* to preach," and proclaim the *word* and *gospel* of that unshadowy dispensation and kingdom, which *ends* and fulfils all mere *signs* and *figures*, and is to *increase* and remain of perpetual continuance. Hence Peter declares the *word* "was published throughout all Judea, and *began* from Galilee, *after* the baptism which John preached," Acts x. 37; and may we not safely conclude, from Peter's so particularly mentioning *this*, as being *after* John's *baptism*, and from the evangelist's mentioning it as *after* his *imprisonment*, that they had heard our Lord express his acting on special principle in thus deferring his *own* public ministry, till his forerunner's, in that forerunning baptism, was *fulfilled*; and especially as his going *into Galilee*, to *begin* his said public ministry, is expressly said to be, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet?" Mat. iv. 14.

Thus it seems he acted with special design, both as to the *place where* and the *time when* he *began* the open publication of the glorious gospel. It was therefore with divine pertinency, that as he *began* this gracious publication, he first of all announced "*the time is fulfilled.*" *His hour was now come.* For well knowing when it

was and when it “*was not yet come,*” he had now waited till John had first preached, according to Paul’s testimony, “the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel;” and so had “fulfilled his course.” See Acts xiii. 24, 25. All this tends forcibly and beautifully to open both the necessity of his being baptized of John, just then, when he was, and the meaning of his answer, when John forbade him. John knew his *own* baptism was not saving, was not Christ’s; but was to decrease and end in Christ’s, being only designed for our Lord’s manifestation to Israel, and to *prepare* the people for his saving baptism.—And knowing this, John plainly and honestly testifies, that he should be made manifest to Israel, “therefore am I come baptizing with water,” John i. 31. This plain and full testimony, from the mouth of John himself, at once evinces that his *baptism*, being but with *water*, was far *different* from *Christ’s*, and *inferior* to it; and that it was to *introduce*, or as a *sign* to assist in turning the minds of the people to look for, receive and submit to the burning, purifying baptism of the gospel.—In short, *water baptism* and *Christ’s* are plainly *type* and *antitype*; and accordingly Peter, speaking of the baptism which now *saves*, uses the Greek word *antitypon*, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Peter doubtless knew the *type* or *figure* could not *save*. It is “the ingrafted word which is able to save” the soul, James i. 21. Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church “with the washing of *water* by the *word*,” Eph. v. 26. This “ingrafted word,” this sanctifying “washing of

water by the word," is all inward and spiritual. It is the *antitype* of the divers washings under Moses, and equally so of *water baptism*, in every form. This *cleanses* the soul, as *outward water* does the *body*, and *puts away* the filth of the *spirit*, as that does the filth of the flesh." Hence, and hence *only*, it is *saving*: herein is the *alone* propriety of Peter's words, "baptism doth also now *save us*." As Christ came to *fulfil* the law of commandments, contained in outward ordinances, and to end every dispensation of signs and shadows, he had many things to submit to, on purpose to *fulfil* the *typical* righteousness of those dispensations. Hence he was circumcised, kept the law, celebrated the passover, &c. On the same ground, it behoved him to be baptized in *water*, the last lively typical representation of his own great work of sanctification, that is, the last in the course of time preceding his beginning the publication of the gospel word from Galilee. But when he came to John to be baptized of him, John not knowing his design in it, nor why it *must* be so, forbade him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Mat. iii. 14. It is not at all strange that John forbade him; for he knew his *own* baptism, being outward, *typical*, and *preparatory*, was to *decrease*, and give place to *Christ's*. It was "unto repentance;" by a total outside immersion, it pointed out the necessity of the removal of all sin, and bringing "forth fruits meet for repentance." It was used for *his manifestation to Israel*, whose *fiery baptism* alone could effect this inward cleansing from all sin. *Christ* was neither ignorant of *himself*, nor guilty of *sin*.

Hence he could not receive John's *figurative* immersion upon the same grounds as others did, neither in order to *repentance* and remission of sin, nor in order to be *made manifest to himself*. John doubtless marvelled, therefore, to see him come to his *baptism*. For though it seems he did not, *before* this, so *fully* know him to be *the Christ* as he did *afterwards*, yet on his now coming to him, it seems he had *some* sense and knowledge of it, and marvelled at his coming. But our Lord graciously condescended to shew on what *grounds* it was *now* necessary: that it was neither in order to repentance in *him*, nor to a manifestation of him to *himself*, nor yet to perpetuate a symbolical institution under the *gospel*; but, on the contrary, to *fulfil* it. Christ knew the *sign* must precede the *substance*. He knew the many *symbols* of the law were but "a shadow of things to come," Col. ii. 17; that the law, with all its figurative offerings, cleansings, and divers washings, was a school-master for a season, to lead to himself, the substance; see Gal, iii. 24. He knew "the baptism which John preached" was the peculiar *sign* or representation of *his own*, and was used to *prepare* the people's minds for it, and thereby *prepare* in their *hearts* the *way of the Lord*, and lead forward to his saving manifestation to Israel. Therefore had he began the publication of the gospel of that *spiritual* kingdom, which is *without* signs and shadows, and *cometh not with outward observations*, before John, the administrator of a *baptism* figurative thereof, had first *fulfilled* his course in that *figurative administration*, it would by no means so fully, strikingly

and instructively have answered and illustrated the designs of eternal wisdom, as his deferring it till *afterwards*; for, how then could John's work have been strictly according to God's design in sending him? that is, *to prepare the way of the Lord—to go before him—and make ready a people prepared for him*; see Luke i. 17.

Hence it was necessary, that, in the course of God's divine Providence, and divers dispensations, he who was to go *before* our Lord in the *power and spirit of Elias*, thus to prepare his way, should be sent seasonably to begin and "*fulfil his course*," in that ministration and *baptism* which was in order to the manifestation of the great gospel baptizer, *before* the publication of that word which *began* from Galilee, *after* his baptism. Hence also it was necessary that Jesus should be baptized in the *figure*, and thus accomplish what he had to do outwardly in the *fulfilment* of *water baptism*, previously to that wonderful descent of the *Holy Ghost* upon him. For as he was to be "anointed to preach the gospel" (see Luke iv. 18) and as this anointing was by the *spirit of the Lord* that was *upon him*, and not by his baptism in *water*, therefore, as the time drew near that he must enter, *thus anointed*, upon his public ministry, it behoved him *first* to submit to John's baptism, that all things might be done in proper season, and follow in regular *succession*, one after another.

The Almighty had given John beforehand to understand, that he on whom he should see the *Holy Ghost* not only *descending*, but also *re-*

maining on him, “the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost,” John i. 33. Thus was the descent and *abiding* of the Holy Ghost, even *on* our Lord himself, pointed out as that which *alone* could qualify to baptize others with it; and it will hold good of all his disciples and ministers to the world’s end. Therefore they have his promise to be with them by his spirit, the Holy Ghost, in the execution of his great commission, to baptize *into* the divine name and power of Father, Son, &c. And as all sent *by him* to baptize with the Holy Ghost must be first so baptized themselves, he sat the glorious example. And when he came afterwards to send *them* forth in the great work of *baptizing*, he declared with divine propriety, “as my Father hath sent *me*, even so send I *you*.” And shewing plainly how that was, he “breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost,” John xx. 21, 22. See how exactly *he* sent *them* to baptize, &c. *as* his Father sent him. His Father, sending him to baptize with the Holy Ghost, *breathed it*, or caused it to *descend* and *abide* upon him. This proved and proclaimed him to be the baptizer *with it*; *he* sending his servants to baptize with the *same* baptism, *breathed on them*, that they might receive a measure of the qualification as *he* received of his *Father*. And this was truly necessary—the same *work* requires the same *qualifications*—“he that believeth on me,” (says Christ) “the works that I do, shall he do also,” John xiv. 12.

He was not baptized with *water*, to qualify him so to baptize others; for he baptized none

in water; the work which he did in baptism, was *inward*, and with the *Holy Ghost*—the spiritual purifying *fire* of the Lord. He did not breathe on his disciples, and *baptize* them with the *Holy Ghost*, to qualify them to *baptize* others in *water*; that had not been sending *them* as his father sent *him*: it had not been sending them, nor enabling them to do *the same work*, and baptize with the *same* baptism, as he did. Had he, after breathing on them, sent them, qualified with the *Holy Ghost*, to baptize with a *mere element*, it had been very *different* from his Father's sending him in the *power* and baptism of the Holy Ghost, to baptize others with the *same*. And as *their* qualification to administer his spiritual baptism was that of the Holy Ghost, coming upon them; so, in his *own case*, the descent and abiding thereof upon *him* was the very thing made use of by the wisdom of God, whereby to manifest him more clearly unto John as the gospel baptizer. Seeing, therefore, this *his* qualification for baptizing with his own great gospel baptism, which is *after* and superior to all *signs*, must be received from on high, *before* he *began* that glorious gospel ministry, which is also without signs, it was, as before noted, necessary for him previously to submit to that baptism, which being *but a sign*, was to *decrease* and end in the substance, which the *sign* pointed to—Hence the necessity of his waiting till John had first baptized many of the people, borne testimony to one coming *after him*, and turned their minds to the necessity of his more spiritual and refining baptism.—And hence also the necessity of his receiving that baptism which

was only *in the sign*, and to vanish as the substance was experienced; not *after*, but *before* he received that *descent* and *abiding* of the Holy Ghost upon him, which pointed him out as the great administrator of that baptism which, in the very *order* of things, is *after* that which is but a shadow of the good things to *come*, Thus the *type* was kept in its *time* and *place*; *before*, not *after*, the antitype. But had not Christ's baptism in the *type*, to fulfil it, as a thing *ending* in the antitype, been *preposterous*, had it been *after* his glorious *antitypical* baptism and anointing, by the descent and abiding of the Holy Ghost upon him?—This being the case, there is evidently a very beautiful display of wisdom and propriety in our Lord's answer to John, when John forbade him. Indeed every part of it, to me, seems full of divine instruction. It satisfied John, and removed all his scruples; for though he did not at first know that Jesus must be *baptized*, as well as *circumcised*, in the *figure*, and submit to the other *figurative* institutions of the law, in order to fulfil *all* the figurative or typical righteousness of the several dispensations preceding the gospel; yet he seems well to have known that his baptism must vanish and *decrease*, as being in its *nature* outward, and in its design but *preparatory* to Christ's. Hence, says he, "he must *increase*, but I must *decrease*," John iii. 30. "I indeed baptize you with *water*, but he shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*," verse 11. And thus, knowing the preparatory, decreasing and terminating nature and design of *water baptism*, what further he wanted to know, to induce him

to baptize our Lord, was, that in order properly to *decrease* and *fulfil* what he already knew must *decrease* and *be fulfilled*, the Lord of life and glory must stoop to it himself; and therefore, as soon as the blessed Jesus had convinced him of this, he readily, without more ado, baptized him.—And of this our Lord's answer at once convinced him, it being full to the purpose. Let us trace it.

The very first word is instructive. “*Suffer it to be so.*” Mat. iii. 15, as if he had said—I indeed have no need of it, no sin to repent of—nor do I wish it done to *manifest* me to *myself*; it is not at all of necessity to me in *this sense*; thou, John, art therefore rather *to suffer it*, than administer it as thou dost to others, to teach them their necessity of a thorough cleansing, and turn their minds to me and my *baptism*, which alone can effect it.—It is true, as thou art sensible, this is not *my baptism*, nor any part of my gospel dispensation: *mine*, all have need of; thou art right in saying thou thyself hast *need to be baptized of me*. And as *mine* is the *alone* gospel baptism, it is not strange that thou admirest at my submitting to that of *water*; for truly it would be highly contrary to the purity and simplicity of my gospel, to perpetuate any ceremonial observances under the full sunshine thereof: but this is by no means my intention, but directly the *reverse*; I do it on purpose to *fulfil* outside things, and make way for me to introduce, and publish to the world, that gospel which is *after*, and to end all types and shadows; and which, for that very reason, I

cannot properly even *begin* the publication of *before*; but must, in order to a regular procedure, defer, till *after* I have submitted to this *figurative baptism* which thou preachest. By which thou mayest clearly see, that in baptizing *me* in the *figure*, a thing so different from my *unfigurative* baptism and gospel, thou art, properly speaking, *to suffer it to be so*.—Next the word *now* is strikingly significant. “Suffer it to be so *now*.” This important word is not used here without special propriety and design—it is the dictate of eternal wisdom; for *now* was the very juncture of time, *now* the pure unshadowy gospel dispensation was but *at hand*, not yet brought in. Christ had not yet suffered; nay, he had not yet even *began* publicly to promulgate the gospel of that kingdom, the baptism of which is only *spiritual*; and therefore he might *now* properly partake of that which only *pointed to it*, and was to *end in it*. And further, *now*, was the exact period for him to do what he had to do outwardly in *fulfilling it*; because John had *now* preached the *baptism of repentance* to many, if not literally, as Paul says, *to all the people of Israel*, Acts xiii. 24, perhaps to nearly, or quite all, in those parts.—At least, according to Mat. iii. 5, we may conclude, they of Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, had *now* been baptized of John, and Christ was *now* soon to *begin* his own gospel ministry, and therein to preach the kingdom of heaven, as an internal unfigurative dispensation, to the souls of men. *Now* therefore was the *very time*, in the course and order of things, for him to be bap-

tized in outward water; the acceptable moment for John to *suffer it to be so*. John had, as he baptized the people, diligently preached the *kingdom at hand*, not yet fully *come*, and taught them to look beyond his *outward*, to Christ's *inward* and saving *baptism*.—This he powerfully and positively declared should be effected by one then among them, though they *knew him not*. So *near* was the kingdom *now at hand*, and fast approaching. This greatly raised their expectations. Indeed the *fire* of Christ's baptism began to kindle in some of their hearts; for Christ declares he came to send *fire on the earth*; “and what will I” (says he) “if it be already *kindled*?” Luke xii. 49. It truly was so in some degree in many minds, even that very fire whereby his baptism thoroughly cleanses, in its complete operation, the whole floor of the heart. Therefore it was *now* time for him soon to *begin* his public gospel testimony, which in strict propriety ought to, and in fact did, succeed, not precede, the baptism of *water*, which was John's—and by which, and the preaching attending it, John had thus prepared the people for Christ's, according to the express design of his mission; which was, as noted before, “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

John's preaching, baptism, and singular life, being in the desert till the time of his shewing unto Israel, then wearing a leathern girdle, and coat of Camel's hair, neither eating flesh nor drinking wine, but eating locusts and wild honey, &c. wrought greatly on the minds of many. They *mused* much of *John*; and were anxious

to know, whether he were the Christ or not. John declared honestly he was *not*; but that he was truly *unworthy*, in comparison of *him*—that his baptism was but *with water*, a very inferior thing, compared with Christ's—designed to *prepare* for it, and just serving in order to his *manifestation to Israel*, and then to *decrease* and give place to him and his baptism, which is to *increase*, and of the *increase* whereof there is no end. John was truly modest, and sought not to defraud Christ of any of his glory; but honestly and openly both confessed his own inferiority, and turned the people's attention from himself to his Lord, saying, "behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," John i. 29.—Thus the time hastened—the state of things ripened.—Indeed the "kingdom of heaven suffered violence." And the minds of some, under the pressure of what they felt working *in them*, rushed into it as it were *by force*; that is, before the *full* time for its more glorious and ample display and establishment, which was not to be till Christ had suffered. Hence, says Jesus, Mat. xi. 12, "from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Their hearts were so engaged, and the working of the *seed* or *leaven* of the kingdom was so prevalent in them, that, as it were by a kind of violent anticipation, they took, or obtained, some real possession and enjoyment of the pure antitypical *life*, liberty, power and substance of the spiritual kingdom of God; before that more glorious out-breaking, and more general establishment and exaltation thereof among the people, which took

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place after Christ had suffered, and had fulfilled all the symbolical righteousness of signs and shadows, and triumphed over them all, nailing them to his cross; thus ascending up on high, leading captivity captive, and bountifully giving gifts unto men.

And why is the kingdom said to suffer this kind of *violence* from the days of John the Baptist, but because the power of his ministry, his living testimony concerning Christ and his baptism, had greatly wrought upon their hearts? John's preaching and description of Christ's baptism was very awakening—he struck against all false dependencies—nothing would do short of fruits worthy of a state of real unfeigned repentance: no claims of outward descent from Abraham—nor any mere plungings in water, no partial cleansings or half-way reformations; not *one* or *two* only, but *every* corrupt tree of the whole heart must be *hewn down*, and cast into the *fire*. Thus the axe was *now* laid to the very *root of the tree*; lopping the branches only would not do—it must come to thorough work, even to burning up all the chaff, and gathering the wheat, winnowed therefrom, into the garner of the Lord. This doctrine was so forcibly promulgated by John, and had such effect upon some who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, that it was now time for Jesus to submit to John's baptism, in order to the *fulfilment* of the typical righteousness thereof, and to make way for the word, gospel and antitypical righteousness of his own inward and spiritual kingdom among them. Thus urgent and pressing was

the necessity of our Lord's soon entering upon his own public ministration in the work of the everlasting gospel, and which he accordingly did enter upon almost immediately after John's imprisonment. Well therefore might he, as to his baptism in water, urge it upon John to "suffer it to be so *now*," just *now*, without further delay: for thus it becometh *us*, says he, to *fulfil all* righteousness. Observe the word *all*—for even the most outward, typical and decreasing institutions, that had really been of God, of right demanded veneration; it was a point of real righteousness rightly to *observe*, and rightly to fulfil them. And as Christ came to "blot out the hand-writing of ordinances, and take it out of the way," (see Col. ii. 13,) and so to bring his people to a single attention to the *new covenant written in the heart*, and of which he himself is mediator; it did truly and highly become him, seeing he came not to redeem from the bondage of the law, and rudiments or shadows of good things, by *destroying*, but by *fulfilling*, to unite with John in fulfilling *water baptism*; for that could no more *pass rightly away*, till it was *fulfilled*, than any other outward ordinance. All the *shadows* were but for a time, and to *end* in the *substance*—and so faithful was Christ in all his work and office, that he would not suffer a jot or tittle to pass from the law, till *all* was *fulfilled*. Hence on the same ground he says to John, "it becometh *us* to fulfil *all* righteousness." The righteousness of that ordinance of *water baptism*, was at best but under or during the *law* of outward commandments. Immersion in water was enjoined and had often been prac-

tised among the Jews before, and baptism was in some sort and on some occasions used as an initiatory ordinance among them. John indeed used it somewhat differently, but both he himself and his baptism were previous to the abrogation of the ceremonial law, which continued in force till several years after he had quite *fulfilled his course*, even till our Lord's resurrection.

Indeed Jesus himself enjoined its punctual observance; so true is the Apostle's testimony, that he was "made under the law," Gal. iv. 4. and was under tutors and governors till the time appointed of the Father, verse 2: so that the expressions of the law and Prophets prophecy-
ing until John, are of no more authority to disprove John's being strictly *under the law*, than they are to disprove his being strictly a *Prophet*.

Christ declares him a Prophet, yea and *more* than a Prophet. And his being *more* than a Prophet, is the true ground of this distinction respecting the law and the Prophets prophecy-
ing until John; not that either the *law* or the *Prophets* had then *ceased*, but John, as great a Prophet as any born of woman, and as truly under the law, was also so *much more* than a Prophet, that he was the immediate forerunner of our Lord; a *voice* proclaiming him not as coming afar off, but as then standing among the people, or as it were a *finger* pointing directly to him, as then come in that body of flesh. And it is remarkable, how much John's preaching and testimony concerning Christ are confined to his

soul-purifying *baptism*. *This*, and a plain, full and repeated declaration and description of the very great difference between *this* and that *with water*, seems to be the main scope and subject with John. And there is much divine wisdom and propriety in its being so; for John was the only administrator of water baptism, even specially ordained, and sent of God, as such. He ran not of himself, as it is to be feared many now do; God *sent* him, yea *sent* him expressly to *baptize with water*, according to John i. 33; and why? plainly “that Christ might be made manifest to Israel,” as before noticed.

Now therefore, as *baptism in water* was that *peculiar* outward action, or ordinance, which was chosen and directed of God to *prepare the way* of his Son, introduce and *manifest him to Israel*; we may depend upon it, it was because he would have him specially *manifested* and introduced to their notice and acceptance, as the great gospel baptizer, refiner and purifier of souls. In short, the *baptism* of Christ comprehends so much, so nearly all, in the work of sanctification, and creation anew in him, that the Father Almighty, in his unlimited goodness, and good will to men, took special care that John, the preparer of his way, in the power and spirit of Elias, should be expressly sent *before* him, baptizing in *water*, as a lively resemblance and representation of his great work, in thoroughly cleansing the floor of the *heart*. This was John's proper business. Hence he is repeatedly and almost constantly called *John the Baptist*, or *baptizer*, as some translate it. He went

before the face of the Lord, (baptizing men's bodies) to prepare *his* way as the baptizer of *souls*. For this reason, he dwells almost wholly on the description of *Christ's baptism*, the manner of his effecting it, the operations and effects of it, and the very great *superiority* of it to that of *water*.

In *words*, he fully and forcibly inculcates, that in its complete operation it effects an *entire* purification—no corrupt or even *unfruitful tree* is to be left—nor chaff remaining with the wheat. The fire of this *baptism* is *holy*, yea the fire of the Holy Ghost; and where the heart submits to its influence, it is, so long as *filth remaineth*, truly unquenchable; it burns till all is consumed, till the dross, and tin, and what is more, the reprobate silver (however specious in appearance, and current among many for true devotion, and real religion) is separated and done away from the gold; for the vessels in the Lord's house spiritually, are made of *beaten gold*, such as have endured the Lord's *fire*, and been refined in his *furnace*; for this only can bear the *hammer*, so as thereby to be beaten and formed into chosen vessels in his holy house, which "holiness becometh forever," see Psalm xciii. 5. And as his house is a house of holiness, so the way of his ransomed is a "way of holiness; the *unclean* shall not pass over it," Isa. xxxv. 8. None can walk in it but in proportion as they are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and purifying fire, and thus made fit vessels for the Lord's house; for the Prophet Zachariah, xiv. 21, winds up his prophecy of gospel times with a positive decla-

ration, that in that day "every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be *holiness* unto the Lord of Hosts."

That this state might be attained, we have seen that John's description of *Christ's baptism*, even to the very inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, outwardly (though I think little of locality in this case) represents it as effecting *thorough purification*, as *perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord*. And this he not only *teaches in words*, but *shews* them in his *manner of baptizing*, plunging them all over in water, as if he would have rivetted it in their minds, that nothing short of complete satisfaction would answer.

He indeed baptized them in *water*, and even in *that*, though merely a *figure* of the *one gospel baptism*, he plainly held forth *perfection*, or perfect cleansing, or why did he wash them all over? If Christ's baptism effects only a *partial*, half-way *cleansing* in this life, would not a *partial*, half-way *washing*, or *sprinkling*, more properly have represented it, and therefore have been a more proper way to have *prepared the way of the Lord*, and furthered his manifestation to Israel?

Surely his forerunner ought *so* to prepare his way, as to give a just idea of *him*, and of his *work*; and *so* to represent and shadow out his baptism, as to raise proper sentiments and desires in the well disposed respecting it. And this, in fact, he was very careful to do; for as

he was so much *more than a Prophet*, that he was specially appointed, and sent to prepare Christ's way, and eminently to contribute, by that very significant *figure*, towards his proper manifestation to Israel, he fell not behind the rest of the Prophets in testimony to the *fulness* and completeness of that baptism, whereby Christ saves his people, not *in* but *from* their sins. He was so faithful to his trust, that, not satisfied with repeated metaphorical illustrations of it by word of mouth, as of the *axe, fan* and *fire*, yea *unquenchable fire*, all centering in one point, that of absolute and *full* purification; he went one step further; he dipped great numbers of them so *totally* into the water, that if they would understand *any thing* by it of the *nature* and *extent* of Christ's baptism, they could scarcely understand any thing short of what was typically intended by it. And having thus powerfully prepared the way of the Lord, by preparing the people to receive him in the administration of that baptism which saves the soul from sin, it was *now* time for the Lord himself to be baptized, in that very *figure* by which his baptism was thus strikingly represented; not to perpetuate it, and induce the people to think more highly of it; but quite on the contrary, so far to *fulfil* it, as to make way for that represented by it. For those outward observances by which the substance was represented (as the *figure* of a man represents the man it is the *figure* of,) were none of them any more the substance itself, than the *figure* of a man is the *man*.

Some are very fond of the mere picture, the lifeless *figure* of their dearest friends, in their *absence*; but few are so weak as to pay much regard to the *picture*; when they are in actual enjoyment of the *presence*, the endearing company, and sweet conversation of their friends. *Water baptism* is not a whit more the baptism of *Christ*, than the *figure* of a man is the *man*. And they who are now baptized therewith, and eat and drink outward bread and wine, in remembrance of *Christ*, have, in these performances abstractedly, no more of the real baptism and supper of the Lord, than a man may have of his *friend*, in the *picture* of him. I say not that a man cannot use these things, and at the same time enjoy something of the substance signified by them. A man may enjoy something of the real and delightful presence of his *friend*, and yet have his *picture* in the room, and sometimes look at it; but whenever his attention is fixed closely upon the *picture*, it is infallibly diverted in the same proportion from his *friend*, though then alive and present. And so it is in these figurative observations. In proportion as they are objects of attention, the mind is diverted from, or stops short of the thing signified. And hence I think it generally holds good, that those who are very tenacious of them, most zealous in their use, urge them the most pressingly on others, and most liberally censure and condemn those, who, believing them to be no gospel ordinances, conscientiously decline them; are less livingly sensible of the *life* and *substance*, than some others, who though they also use them, are far less built up in and tenacious of them. At the

very best, they are but *shadows* of the *good things*. "If thine eye be single" (to the light of Christ) "thy whole body shall be full of light." See Mat. vi. 22. Only keep thine eye single, and fixed upon the *outward sun*, and the shadow will be *behind thee*, and out of thy *sight*. Turn about, and fix thine eye full on the *shadow*, and then the *sun* will be *behind thee*; and whilst thou art fixed in attention to the *shadow*, thou wilt see little or nothing of the face of the *sun*. Thus some who *begin in the Spirit*, turn about, and seek to be made perfect in the *flesh*, or in outward ordinances. But granting thy attention not *singly* to the *shadow*, yet try it a thousand ways, and thou shalt never be able to pay either less or more attention *thereto*; but thou wilt be obliged to have thy attention proportionally *less* to the *sun*, than it would be, wert thou equally attentive, and that attention *singly directed* to the sun. In like manner, the man whose *eye is single* to the divine *light* of *Jesus* in his own *heart*, and whose attention is steadily to the work of *his baptism* there, has as much *more* true and substantial experience of the blessed and saving operation and effects thereof, than the man, who, equally attentive, suffers his attention to be divided, and partly diverted to the outward *figures*; as a man in close and single attention to the *sun*, has *more* of its light, and sees more of its real brightness and glory, than he who observes an equal attention on the whole, but suffers it to be divided between the *sun* and the *shadow*. And this I take to be the very ground and reason of our Lord's faithful *fulfilment* of *all* such *figurative righteousness*, that

so his servants might press forward to the substance signified, and figured out thereby. Paul told the Galatians, "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," Gal. v. 2. This must amount to thus much at least, that in proportion as they relied on, or were taken up with attention to that outward performance, they were diverted from Christ—and this is just as true of *water baptism*, and every other outward symbol. I suppose many may readily drink it down, that so certainly as a man is *outwardly circumcised*, he can have no benefit at all from *Christ*, who yet think *outward baptism* an ordinance of his gospel: but what sound reason can be given, why *one* outward ordinance, once absolutely commanded of God, but now ceased in point of obligation, to give place to the *substance* once *signified* by it, should so much more effectually prevent our being profited by Christ, than *another* outward ordinance, in like manner once commanded of God, but long since as fully ceased in point of obligation, and for the same reason, to give place to the substance?

The truth is, every outward observation whatever, so far as it diverts the mind from inward attention to the work of Christ, so far it prevents effectually our being profited by him. And I am sorry to perceive such numbers of professing Christians striving so hard, as I think they do, to make these things serve as a substitute for that which is *saving*. They evidently substitute *water baptism* instead of Christ's; for they do not scruple to call it the *one* baptism of the gospel. They expressly maintain it to be Christ's,

and apply to it many texts which evidently speak of far deeper matters; as baptism *into Christ, into his death, &c.* and that which speaks of the baptism *which now saves us*, although the text itself declares it is *not* the putting away the filth of the flesh (the proper work of water) yet they insist *it is* water; and so make it out, if they substantially make out any thing by it, that *a figure saves us*. Let none therefore marvel that Christ was so careful to be baptized in *water*, in order to *fulfil* it, *before* he would go forth publicly into that work, wherein he was to be the baptizer of souls to salvation; for since we find that even his *so* doing is laid hold of, in direct contradiction to the whole scope and design of it, and urged as a proof of its continuance, how much greater would have been the influence of his example, towards continuing a *figure* in preference to the *substance*, had he first published his own everlasting gospel and baptism, and after that been baptized himself *in water*, and *so* baptized others? But as it seems he intended not to baptize others in water, doubtless to guard against the force of example; so neither would he be so baptized himself, *after* he had once began his own public and soul-baptizing ministry; but very carefully did what he had to do in outward *fulfilment* of that type, both *before* he began his said ministry, and *before* he had gathered any disciples, yet so as to be after the rest of the people in those parts of the country had been baptized; for it would not have seemed so proper for him to submit to an ordinance that was *figurative* of his own baptism, for the special purpose of *fulfilling* it, before its

adminipstrator had, for some little time at least, practised it: but *now*, John having baptized many, and raised their hopes of a more spiritual and soul-saving baptism, or, as Luke has it, "when all the people" (meaning doubtless there about Jordan) "were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also, being baptized," &c. and we do not read of John's ever baptizing another person *there* afterwards.

Now therefore, as already evinced, was the suitable time for Jesus to be baptized. And though this was done, as before urged, not to perpetuate that sign, but expressly to *fulfil* it, that so *all* that kind of ceremonial righteousness might be *fulfilled*, and not a jot or tittle of it pass any otherwise away: yet this hindered not the propriety of John's continuing his preaching and service in that *sign*, in other places, a while longer, in order to Christ's manifestation, and the preparation of his way before him, *there also*, until nearly the time that Christ *began* to publish the word openly in and from Galilee: though *before* Christ would do this, John had, as already proved, *finished his course* in that figurative dispensation, and our Lord had particularly *heard* of his imprisonment. After which, going into Galilee, he soon entered upon the publication of that spiritually baptizing word, and gospel ministration, which, as before observed, began from thence, *after* the baptism which John preached, in the *figure*.

When John proclaimed, "behold the lamb of God," two of John's own disciples immedi-

ately "followed Jesus," John i. 36, 37, as did several others soon after; for John's preaching, &c. had *now* in good degree prepared their minds to follow him, as soon as they knew him. But the disciples of John do not appear to have gone from *him* to *Jesus*, as from *one* outward baptizer to *another*. We have no account of their receiving baptism in water, after they became followers of Jesus. As *that* was not *his*, but *John's*, there was no need of repeating it upon those who had been John's disciples. But had that of *water* been Christ's, and yet distinct from John's, they would doubtless have received it.— John's preaching and baptism in water do not appear to have prepared the way of the Lord, by preparing people for a second *baptism in water*; but by preparing them for that of the Holy Ghost, and purifying fire. For *this* were some hearts at least, if not many, *now* prepared.

Now therefore cometh Jesus to be baptized of John in Jordan; for it was *now* time those knew him, who were thus prepared for him, that they might receive him. His thus coming to John, and being first baptized in the *type*, and then in the *Antitype*, the Holy Ghost from heaven, confirmed John's knowledge of him, and gave a fair occasion for him to point him out, and proclaim him as the baptizer and Saviour of souls to the people; thus opening their way to advance from the *sign* to the *substance*; from the *decreasing* ministration of himself, the servant and forerunner, to the *increasing* one of the Son and Saviour. John could not with full confidence point him out to them, till he *knew* him. That could

not in proper season and succession take place, *by which* he *certainly* knew him to be the great gospel baptizer, till he had first baptized him in the *figure*, seeing the *figures* are the *shadows* of good things to *come* after them. Had Jesus received water baptism much sooner, it had been out of season, and before his way was prepared by his forerunner. Had he deferred it much longer, it had deferred their knowledge and reception of him, whose hearts were *now* prepared for him.— And, moreover, had he deferred it till John was cast into prison, whence he never came out, he could not have publicly received it by John; by which reception of it from *him*, and thus rightly timed, he at once confirmed it, as having been a *sign* of his *own*; *fulfilled* it, as of *no real use* where his *own* is livingly known; and gave John fair opportunity clearly to *know him*, and proclaim him the *lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.*

Thus John *testified* of him in *due* time, agreeably to Paul's expression, 1 Tim. ii. 6. "who gave himself a ransom for all, *to be testified in due time.*" Having seen that Christ's baptism in the *figure* could be only *suffered*; seeing the figures precede, point to, but belong not to the gospel, and that *now*, before the figurative dispensation was abolished, was the only proper and acceptable time for it. Let us observe, who were the only proper persons to *fulfil* that one peculiar sign and figure of saving baptism—— "*suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us.*" John, as the ordained administrator of water baptism, and as such, and peculiarly therein,

the forerunner of Christ, and Christ, as the *end* and *ender* of all *types* and *shadows*, were the identical persons to unite in *fulfilling* this *decreasing* and terminating dispensation. Hence the divine propriety of the word *us*: “thus it becometh *us*.” But what to do? not establish and perpetuate the old Mosaic institutions, in a round of signs and ceremonies, nor any other *new* or somewhat varied observations in things outward and symbolical; for all these are but *rudiments*, and equally *weak* and unappertaining to the pure gospel state. What then? why, the exact reverse of all this. “It becometh us to *fulfil*,” fulfil what? “all righteousness.”—None of the great and solemn ordinances of God were so outward as to be unworthy of fulfilment. All pointed to Christ, and to his work and kingdom; but this of *water baptism*, as now used by John, and by him repeatedly contrasted with Christ’s, or the two placed by him very pointedly, as type and antitype, required our Lord’s special notice and *fulfilment*, previously to his own public gospel ministration. And though, as then used, it was introduced the *last* in course of the great *shadows* peculiarly representative of Christ’s great work in men; yet was it almost, if not quite, the first specially *fulfilled* by him.

John’s ministration in the *shadow*, began too near the meridian splendor of Christ, the gospel sun, to have any long continuance previous to his glorious manifestation to Israel.—Even outwardly, as the sun advances nearer to its meridian altitude, the length of the shadow decreases. And right under the sun’s full blaze,

the sun being in its zenith point, shining on all sides equally, the shadow vanishes, or at least is under foot. And I believe it has inwardly, even in respect of baptism, vanished quite out of estimation and notice in the minds of some, as the spiritual sun has gradually arisen upon them; and who yet have afterwards, through the neglect of a single eye to the light, gradually receded therefrom, till (as in the afternoon outwardly) towards night, in proportion as the sun's warming and enlivening influence is lessened, the length and unsubstantial importance of the empty shadow has greatly increased with them—they have eagerly grasped at the shadow, which in itself is nothing but a *likeness* of the substance.—We all know a *shadow* outwardly is nothing—and in spirituals also this is so strictly true, that Paul says, “circumcision is *nothing*, and uncircumcision is *nothing*,” 1 Cor. vii. 19; and it holds equally in outward baptism, and the supper.—If *one* shadow were any thing in the gospel, *another* might as well be something.—Circumcision would be as much something as baptism.—The gospel excludes them all.

Let not therefore him who is outwardly baptized, suppose he has therein something that belongs to the gospel; neither let him who rejects it, either Quaker or other, think he *therefore* has something; for outward baptism is nothing evangelical, and the mere rejection of it is *nothing*.—“The new creature, the *living* faith of the *operation of God*, working by love, is *all in all*, is the very substance of things hoped for, “the evidence of things not seen,” Heb. xi. 1.

Thus necessary was it for all these old things to pass away, be shaken and *fulfilled*, that the new and living substance, which cannot be shaken, may *remain*.—And as John was the forerunner of Christ, and the administrator of water baptism, it belonged to him and Jesus; they were the *us*, to whose allotment it properly fell to fulfil it.—Christ had the typical righteousness of divers other *figures* to *fulfil*; hence, afterwards he celebrated the *passover*, and plainly pointed his disciples to the antitype of it. They must eat his flesh, and drink his blood, or have no life in them. And this he assures them is spiritual, “it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing,” John vi. 63. And even John’s work, in *fulfilling* these things, was not wholly confined to the outward baptism of our Lord. His constant testimony that *his* baptism was but *with water*, as he administered it to others, his lively and contradistinguishing description of *Christ’s*, as that which effects entire sanctification, and burns up *all* the chaff (not only sin, but figurative ceremonial observations: for these are as *chaff* to the *wheat*, and as trees that bring not forth any real good fruits of the gospel) tended much to exalt the substance above all signs in the minds of the people. And when once the *substance* is in *due* estimation, and properly exalted over all in our minds, under the gospel, the *sign* immediately loses its importance, and Christ becomes *all in all* to us.

But John not only divers times repeats the important distinction between *baptism with water*, and that with the *Holy Ghost*, and holds to view

the comparative inefficacy, and *decreasing* nature and design of the *one*, and the excellency, all-sufficiency and *increasing* nature of the *other* : he degrades all claims of the most exact and tenacious adherents of ceremonial institutions, without the heart-purifying work of the Lord.

Even the zealous Pharisees, notwithstanding all they could boast of relationship to Abraham, either by blood, by circumcision, or the most strict and scrupulous outward observance of the whole law of commandments, contained in (the shadowy) ordinances, he upbraids as a generation of vipers; and plainly intimates to them, that the true seed of Abraham are they in whom the *axe*, the *fan* and the *fire* of the gospel make thorough work; and that in this way God is able to raise up children in the true and living faith of faithful Abraham, of such whose hearts were as stones. There might be such then present, whose disregard to those things, wherein lay nearly all the religion of too many of the Pharisees, was such as to render them extremely obnoxious and contemptible in their view, and who yet were more easy to be brought in love with the essentials of true religion than they; though they, in the fury of their zeal against these, might strikingly exhibit the viper in spirit. I believe the inward feelings and outward deportment of many, who have considerable zeal in exteriors, are the very reverse of this, in meekness, gentleness and love. May they experience a blessed increase herein; and may all ranks and denominations of Christians, beholding the excellency hereof, and its vast importance, in pre-

ference to all party attachments, and zeal for or against ceremonials, more and more press after it and into it themselves, and cherish and promote it in each other.

I doubt not many of the Pharisees were zealously observant of the Mosaic institutions, because they verily believed it was God's will they should be so (as doubtless it was in a right way and disposition.) I doubt not but some of these were moral, goodly sort of men, as to outward regularity, uprightness and honest dealing, and here they rested, well satisfied, and despised the less observant and less regular. But here resting (even though they might be, as touching every thing merely ceremonial, or even merely moral, pretty blameless) they were and must be far short of that, which in every age of the world has been the true righteousness, riches and salvation of souls. These, as well as the more impure and grossly polluted within, John wanted to alarm, and shake from their false rest, and fig-leaf covering; that they might come to know the pure and living righteousness of *faith*, that works *by love*, purifies the heart, gives victory, removes mountains, and is the *substance*, being of the operation of God in the heart; not a mere assent to certain well-established facts, nor yet merely a full and firm persuasion of their truth and certainty; but a real and living hold on Christ the life, in inward union with him; by a deep and powerful working of the holy principle of light and life in the soul. This is that righteousness which exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, and

without which Christ says we cannot enter into the heavenly kingdom. See Mat. v. 20. This, in fulness established, supercedes all signs and shadows. Hence John, by rejection of the Pharisæical dependence on descent from Abraham, &c. was preparing *his way*, who coming *after* him, had much of this nature to do, among the superstitious and bigotted people; who, as he rightly testified, had they been truly the children of Abraham, would have done the works of Abraham; but not being truly his seed, in the heavenly birth, and holy principles of life and immortality, wherein the joint heirship with Christ ever consisted, they were foolishly, though zealously, endeavouring to climb up some other way; by outward performances, and exact observation of ordinances; a kind of righteousness which never gave admittance, or brought into the kingdom. And as men have ever been prone to stop short in these, and rely more or less upon them, as things of substantial benefit in themselves; God was pleased, in the fulness of time, to send his son, made of a woman, made under *the law*, and purposely brought under the observance of these things, for their *fulfilment*, in order expressly to *blot out*, remove and take out of the way; that a more single attention might take place to the writing of the law in the heart; the very *life*, sum and *substance* of the *new covenant*. See Jer. xxxi. 33. John's preaching tended directly to *prepare* for and introduce an increasing attention to these great things within, and thus powerfully contributed to promote that living acquaintance with, and single dependence on the substance,

which is the only thing that ever rightly qualifies the mind to see beyond, and thoroughly, understandingly, and profitably renounces and relinquishes the *sign*. This was *fulfilling* his commission, preparing the way of the Lord, pointing out, declaring and promoting the *decrease* of all figurative righteousness, including even that of his *own baptism*; and assisting in the *fulfilment* thereof, in order to the *increase*, establishment and general prevalency of that which was before all signs, and remains to the faithful, the summum bonum, the one good thing needful, the life and substance of all true religion.

CHAPTER II.

John's baptism still in use after Christ was baptized, and on what grounds. Why John must *decrease*. Why the least in the kingdom is greater than he. Water baptism never a gospel ordinance, any more than burnt offerings, circumcision, &c. Christ's transfiguration clearly shows all these done away together, and water baptism as much as any of them, though afterwards sometimes used in condescension, as divers other figures were. John seen in the mount as Elias. Peter's conduct with Cornelius, no perpetuation of water; but rather a prudent condescension. The full dispensation of Christ, is *God* and *man* in union. Man prone to imagery. Signs were ever by indulgence. A touch upon the passover. Christ eating it points to its antitype, the inward feast, and communion of saints.

ALTHOUGH on very sufficient grounds, as already evinced, our blessed Lord received that baptism which was figurative of his *own*, and so far as in *that manner* behoved him *fulfilled* it, previously to his entrance on his own public ministration, in preaching the gospel, yet for his further manifestation to Israel in some other places, that watery *sign*, and the preaching accompanying it, were afterwards continued by John, till some little time before the blessed Jesus *began* his said public ministry; and the disciples of Jesus having learned that baptism of John, and understanding it was for their Lord's manifestation to Israel, they also practised it, and doubtless with a view and desire of

his more extensive and speedy manifestation among the people; though we have no account that Christ ever at all encouraged them therein, but an express assurance that he “himself baptized not,” John iv. 2. Perhaps he might have no objection (as ceremonials were yet in use, as a school-master leading to himself, the life and substance, the pure gospel state not generally commencing till after his resurrection) to their baptizing others, as John had them, in the *figure*: well knowing that occasion might thereby be taken to turn the mind profitably from that *likeness* of entire *cleansing*, to the necessity of the *thing itself*, his own *saving* baptism; and which seems to have been the very *design* of water baptism, as used by John. No other need of it seems ever to have existed; and no other end seems to have been aimed at, by the divine wisdom, in sending John baptizing in that manner. It was to that end well adapted, and to that only.—And that John knew this, seems evident by his declaring *that* baptism was for Christ’s manifestation, by his so constantly pointing from *it* to its * *antitype*, the baptism that saves the soul; and by his acknowledgment that himself must *decrease*, and Christ *increase*. Had John been the administrator of a gospel ordinance, and therein abode faithful, he might, instead of *decreasing*, have increased therein, but being the administrator of a *figurative* ordinance, in its very nature, end and de-

* The word in the common translation rendered *figure*, 1 Pet. iii. 21; speaking of *the baptism which now saves us* is antitypon; and surely it is the antitype, and not the type of figure, that is saving.

sign, *decreasing*; he *as* its administrator, must *decrease*: for though as great a Prophet as any born of woman, yea, as Christ declares, “much more than a Prophet,” the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way of the Lord; yet truly, as the Lord himself further asserts, Mat. xi. 2, “he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he;” that is, greater than John, as John the Baptist: for it is expressly *as* John the Baptist, that Christ says this of him; and in this sense it will forever hold true. For though as a saint and servant of God, as a Prophet of the Most High, John was great, yea, very great in the heavenly kingdom, “a burning and a shining light,” as Christ still further testifies, John v. 35, yet that gospel kingdom which John proclaimed as *near at hand*, and prepared the way for, being void of all mere figurative ordinances, and operating wherever it cometh in its full glory to their fulfilment, abolition, out-blotting, and entire removal out of the way; the least in the pure spirituality thereof, (having seen and advanced, beyond and to the disuse and total rejection of all such signs and figures, as being comparatively mean and beggarly elements, of use only till the seed came, and at best but shadows of the good things to come) *is* and ever must be in this respect greater than John, *as* John the Baptist; the administrator of *one*, though a very significant one, of those *figurative ordinances*. And even though John should sit higher, shine brighter, and be far greater in the kingdom of eternal glory, than many of these, yet *as* the Baptist, or baptizer in water, he was under a dis-

—pensation that was vastly *low* in comparison of that pure gospel state which these *little* ones all witness in the *new covenant dispensation* ; which water baptism could no more be a part of, or belong to, than circumcision, burnt offerings, or any other rituals of the Mosaic dispensation. And if *Moses*, however faithful in all his house, as a servant, must as to his law of ceremonials, his dispensation of signs and shadows, *decrease* and give place to the Son, surely so must *John*. The *weakness*, outwardness and insufficiency, on account of which the *shadows* of Moses have vanished, are as apparent in *water baptism*, as in any of these ; and it is of as much real necessity that this be *decreased*, *fulfilled* and cease, in order to the *true* and *pure* enjoyment of its *antitype*, the *saving baptism of Christ*, as that circumcision, and the divers washings and offerings of the law should cease, for the same reason, or in order to the right enjoyment of *their* antitype.

It is rather mournful to see so many religious, good people—people who love God, and are in good degree enlightened, entangled as it were in the bondage of outward and typical ordinances, in these antitypical gospel days. What volumes of controversy, and not always in the sweetest temper have been and are written, and from time to time even unto this day very zealously spread, read and rejoiced in, which yet contain little or nothing relative to the life of God in the soul, the one soul-saving, sanctifying baptism of the gospel, or the one soul-satisfying communion of saints, and supper of the

Lord; but are filled with learned or unlearned argumentation, about things as foreign to the true Christain life and dispensation, as the sacrificing of bullocks, rams and lambs!

I feel real tenderness towards those who are not yet so translated into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, not yet so enlightened as to rise superior to their attachments to elementary and figurative observances; and I wish not unnecessarily to hurt the feelings of one sincere soul. I know some such hold water baptism, and what they call the other sacrament, in great veneration; and I do sincerely desire them not to take offence at my freely endeavouring to evince them to belong not to the gospel. It is love in great sincerity that engages me to shew them that these things stand exactly on a level with the long ceased ceremonials of the law, in point of obligation under the gospel. It would be as strictly a gospel controversy, were men now to write volume after volume respecting the due and precise manner of offering the ancient daily sacrifice; as is that about immersion and sprinkling, or that respecting the various opinions and modes of administration in what is called the Lord's supper. Thou needest have no more, O thou true-hearted Christain traveller, to do with *these*, and the *former*: it no more imports to thy real gospel duty, or thy growth in the divine life, to understand and practise in the most precise manner, according to ancient original institution and usage in *these*, than in the *others*. Think of what entire insignificancy it is, to controvert points respecting

the offering of the lambs, "one in the morning, the other at even," as ordained of old to be done day by day for a continual burnt offering, Num. xxviii. 3, 4. Think how unimportant to dispute, whether a *fifth* or a *tenth* part of an ephah of flour, or whether mingled with a *third*, *fourth* or *eighth* part of a hin of beaten oil, would now under the gospel be the most acceptable meat offering to the Lord; and thou mayest perhaps perceive or obtain a true glimpse at least of the real insignificancy to thy life and duty, as a Christian, of all the elaborate enquiries and discussions, respecting either what is the proper mode, or who are the proper subjects of either the one or the other of the sacraments so called.

But seeing many pious souls are yet under the *vail* in these things, wishing to serve God, and fearing to offend him; and seeing it is much for the worldly interest, emolument and popularity of too many who assume the character and office of gospel ministers, to keep them still under this vail and covering, and in bondage to the beggarly elements; I am willing to use my endeavours to evince yet more fully and clearly the absolute cessation and dismissal of signs and symbols, as never having pertained to the fulness of the gospel state I think this is clearly exhibited by our Lord at the transfiguration; and I think it as much includes *John* as *Moses*; as much water baptism as circumcision; and as much the passover, as burnt offerings. In short, it is evident to my mind, that the whole tendency and design of the vision was to shew

the equal dismissal of *all* those *shadows* of the good things to come. And that for this reason; of all the holy men of old, all the great types of our Immanuel, Moses and John in the character of Elias appeared, on this wonderful occasion, with Christ and his disciples in the mount. None else would have fully answered the design of the transfiguration. But these *two*, representing the complete body of signs and ceremonies, were the identical persons to appear and disappear to them, and in testimony of the disannulling of all those foregoing ordinances, as the washings, oblations, &c. under Moses, were but *signs*, and but until the full coming in of the dispensation of life and substance: and as the baptism used by John was also but a sign, so now, in exhibiting the entire abolition of both, our Lord in some sort did it by way of *sign* or *representation*. And as it requires some spiritual discernment, clearly to perceive that offerings, water baptism, &c. never were nor could be more than *signs* and *figures*, what they were particularly the signs and figures of, how long they were properly used, and when utterly abolished; so does it also require some true illumination from on high, to read and understand the mystery of the transfiguration, and to see plainly that the whole drift and design of it was, to teach us that the gospel, the kingdom, the baptism of Jesus, are all inward and spiritual, the *antitypical righteousness*, which remains, and ever will remain to the true church; though all that typical righteousness, which Christ spake of in his answer to John, introductory to his baptism in the figure, be fulfilled.

When God would show Abraham, Gen. xv. that his seed should be a stranger in a land not theirs, and after four hundred years affliction "come out with great substance," he ordered him to take an heifer, she goat, ram, turtle dove, and a young pigeon. Dividing several of these in the midst, he "laid each piece one against another." And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and lo, "an horror of great darkness fell upon him;" and further it "came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." A very striking representation of Israel's iron furnace of affliction in Egypt, and the burning lamp, or, as the margin reads, "a lamp of fire," very beautifully betokened their joyful deliverance, when long after the angel of the lord led them by a "pillar of fire" from the severe exactions of their hard-hearted enemies and task-masters. Thus dealt infinite wisdom and goodness with his favoured servant, good old Abraham; by striking representations shewing him things to come, and divers other instances of somewhat similar representations might be adduced.

But passing them, we come now to that very important *one*, the transfiguration, and to unfold a little its genuine import and meaning, according to the degree of understanding received. I shall first endeavor to evince, that it was *John the Baptist* who, with Moses, appeared in the mount, though under the denomination and character of *Elias*. It is clear that John was the *Elias*, that is the *Elijah*, whom the Lord by the

Prophet promised to send to prepare the way of the Lord, Mal. iii. 1, 4, 5. This promise Mark recites expressly as fulfilled in the coming and services of John, Mark i. 2, "as it is written in the Prophets, behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

That this was *John*, is further evident by what the angel said to John's father, good old Zacharias, Luke i. 16, 17, "many of the children of Israel shall be turned to the Lord their God—and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias," &c. Indeed Christ's own words are full to the purpose; he positively declares, Mat. xi. 14, "if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come;" but as he did not mean that Elias was actually come again in person, but that *John* was come "in the power and spirit of Elias," as before mentioned; he adds, verse 15, knowing how outward the people's minds were, and how spiritually dull they were of hearing, "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He doubtless knew that many could not so hear as to believe and receive it, in its naked signification, especially as John had denied his being *Elias*. These are contradictions to mere human wisdom; the ear that understandingly hears them, the Lord alone openeth.

John spake truth from the heart; for when they asked him, "what then, art thou Elias?" John i. 21, they were so carnal and outward in their apprehensions, that doubtless John saw they so little understood the scripture prophecies

and promises, that they were looking for the personal coming of Elias from heaven ; and perhaps in a fiery chariot, his ascension or taking up having been represented as in a chariot of fire. John, answering their question according to their sense in asking it, saith, " I am not ;" thereby harmoniously coinciding with Christ's design in speaking in *parables* ; for Christ thanked his Father that he had " hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes," Mat. xi. 2, 5. These *babes* are the same with those who have *ears to hear*, and Christ spake in parables to concur with his Father in hiding these things from the prying and investigations of this world's wisdom and prudence : for when " the disciples came and said unto him, why speakest thou unto them in parables ?" Mat. xiii. 10, " he answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to *them* it is not given," verse 11 ; and in conformity to these designs of Christ and the Father, to make foolish the wisdom of this world, John answered, that he was not *Elias* ; as truly he was not in the sense of the question, and yet in the sense of heaven and of the Holy Ghost he was indeed *Elias*, yea, the only *Elias* that was sent in fulfilment of the promise, to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus. So that had he not come in the power and spirit of Elias, the promise, for aught that appears, had utterly failed.

This point, thus clearly established in the sacred records, contributes much towards a right understanding of the transfiguration. The trans-

actions of this ever memorable and important scene, I have no doubt, were designed to unfold, as far as those who saw and heard them, or those who since read them, have “ears to hear,” the deep mystery of the three dispensations of Moses, John and Jesus—the entire passing away of all that was but typical in the two *former*, as things liable in their very nature and in the designs of infinite wisdom ever meant to be shaken and removed; that so the *latter*, the dispensation of life and substance, the pure spiritual unshadowy gospel and kingdom of Christ, as things that cannot be *shaken or removed*, might with greater clearness *succeed, and remain*.

To this purpose, the Lord of this glorious dispensation, after testifying that some then *standing* there should live to see it—that is, should “not taste of death till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power,” Mark ix. 1.—in order to prepare some of his disciples for a more extensive and clear discovery of its purely spiritual, antitypical nature and glory, and to give as it were a clue to the same discovery to others (see Mat. xvii. Mark ix. Luke ix.) in that and after ages, “taketh with him Peter, and James, and John” (three eminent instruments in the primitive church) “and leadeth them up into an high mountain, apart by themselves.” This may shew us, that in order to a clear reception of divine knowledge, our minds must both *ascend above* and be *separated from* the busy scenes of of mere earthly joys, cares and associations, as it were into the mount of sequestration, into an holy abstraction of soul, where angels ascend and

descend, and the converse is at times with God: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Here our Lord "was transfigured before them, and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them *Elias*, with *Moses*, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here." Alas! too many think it is *good* to retain the long since *fulfilled* and abrogated symbols of good things, to this very day; and not content with, or not enough acquainted with the one true "tabernacle of God, that is inwardly with men," Rev. xxi. 3, are with Peter, for building *three*, in order to retain a little from the ceremonies of *Moses*, as the passover (which they dignify with the name of the Lord's supper) and a little from John (here seen as *Elias* in whose life, power and spirit, John came) to wit, *water baptism*. So Peter, ignorantly thinking it *good* to *remain* where all *three* might have place together, proposeth, or asks liberty, as followeth; "let us make *three tabernacles*, one for *thee*, one for *Moses*, and one for *Elias*; for he wist not what to say," Mark ix. 2, 7. In very deed, he *wist not*, or, according to Luke's account, *knew not what he said*: knew not that this proposal struck directly against the *simplicity* of the gospel, and was contrary to the life and design of the transfiguration.

He was for buildings which belong not to the *gospel day*; tabernacles for those whose dispensations were but *preparatory* to that which is purely of Jesus: for there was a *cloud* that over-

shadowed them. Oh! that it may be seen, and duly considered, how exactly this is the case now, with those who still think it *good to remain* under the shadows. Is not the cloud *still* over them? The *signs* under *Moses* and *John* (here *Elias*) pointed men to *Christ*; but the full dispensation of *Jesus*, is nothing short of *God* and *man* in heavenly union. As then in him, so now in *all* the seed, all his true disciples, there is a real joining and uniting of the life of *man* in and with the life of *God* in the soul. "He that is joined to the Lord is *one spirit*," Cor. vi. 17.

This is livingly taught us in the Christ of God being truly both the Son of *God* and the Son of *man*. Here all preceding dispensations *end*; the *signs* are superceded; Christ becomes our *one life* in the heavenly fellowship, and, as Paul says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. Here we enjoy the true riches and glory of his inheritance *in the saints*, which is Christ in us the hope of glory. See Eph. i. 18, Col. i. 27.—What can all the *shadows*, of the good things *to come*, do for those who possess and enjoy the good things themselves, are led unto, live and act in the life and substance pointed at by all the types and figures of old? Did Christians know and enjoy this mystery in its true fulness and glory, all *old* things would be done away; for *here* all things *become new*; all things *of God*; here we are *complete* in *Jesus*, in whom the *fulness* dwells; and have no need at all of *signs* to *perfect* us in our Christian duty: no need of outward washing, being washed in his blood, inwardly sprinkled, to the cleansing of the heart;

no need of outward circumcision—our circumcision and baptism are in Christ—into *death with him*, putting off the body of the sins of the flesh: no need of eating bread and drinking wine, in remembrance of him, seeing he has become *our life*; we enjoy his soul-satiating, his all-consoling presence—he sups with us, and we with him—eating the bread of life, and drinking the new wine of salvation with us in the heavenly kingdom of his Father, inwardly and spiritually—where all types cease forever—where the faith which is the very substance of things hoped for, the new creature in this union of God and man, *is all in all*.—Here every thought is “brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” ii Cor. x. 5. No mere outward observations can add any thing useful to this state; and this is the reason why they must and do here cease. The reason why they were once used was, that men were too much alienated from the life and substance—they were used as outward pointers to the inward life.—When the resurrection of Christ the life is fully known in us, all mere signs are, and in the very nature of things must be, entirely superceded. Till then, we may be in a state of mixture, as many are with their three tabernacles, one for *Jesus*, one for *John*, and one for *Moses*. Hence the *figurative* dispensation was not altogether abolished. *outwardly* till Christ’s *outward* resurrection; this being generally the case in the *inward*. Those who have not known *this* pretty fully in *themselves*, are mostly some way or other relying more or less on outward things; but they whose life is fully and truly in *him*, who is the resurrection and the

life, are got beyond all improper reliance on any thing but the life of Jesus in them—this is the plain reason why the *antitypical* baptism, which *now saves us*, is by the *resurrection of Christ*—not by washing in water to put away the filth of the flesh—for though some of the translators use the word *figure* in a text which speaks plainly of this *spiritual* baptism, it is not so in the Greek. The original word, as already noted, is *antitypon* : so that the saving baptism, there spoken of, and which is by the resurrection and life of Christ, is not a *figure*, but the very *antitype itself*.—Had Peter known this at the time of the transfiguration, as well as he did when he wrote his epistles, it is in no wise probable that he would have thought the building of tabernacles, for the retention of signs and shadows, a gospel *labour* : but seeing Peter was as yet so far from a clear understanding of the nature and pure spirituality of the gospel, as to propose *three* tabernacles even then, just when Christ was specially opening the *dismissal* of all but one, that is, “the tabernacle of God” that is “with men,” Rev. xxi. 3.; let none marvel that this same Peter afterwards commanded the household of Cornelius to be baptized in water, a thing in no wise strange for him to do, even though it had not been done merely in condescension, as there is much reason to believe it was. He remained for some time too outward and limited in his ideas; he did not know that the gospel was an universal thing, extending to Gentiles as well as Jews—so that a wonderful vision was vouchsafed, to remove his scruples, and induce his visit to Cornelius—and when there, God gave him words suit-

able to the occasion, and which being delivered in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with divine power, were evidently instrumental to *their baptism* (with the *Holy Ghost*) who heard him, even in such a remarkable manner, that at his first utterance, as he *began to speak* the *Holy Ghost fell on them*.

This at once struck Peter, as being an exact and gracious performance of the promissory word of the Lord Jesus—"John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the *Holy Ghost*." See Acts xi. 15, 16. For this baptism was *now* so evidently dispensed through Peter's preaching, that he immediately remembered this precious promise of our blessed Lord—which had been very *illy* applied by him to the *Holy Ghost* falling on them, had *that* not been strictly the *baptism* of the *Holy Ghost*, as intended by the promise—nor indeed can any, who clearly know this baptism, think strange of Peter's recollecting *this promise*, and applying it to what took place at this memorable season; nor is there any doubt with me but that the *Holy Ghost* brought it to his remembrance, and shewed him it was now *actually* performed through *himself* as an *instrument*; for God had truly and eminently enabled him to execute, in a very exact and striking manner, the great commission of our Lord. Mat. xxviii. 19, which was to *teach baptizing*; not *teach*, and *then baptize*, as two separate acts; but by *teaching* in the power and efficacy received from *on high*, they were to *baptize* them into the very *name*, that is, the life and power, of the Father, Son and *Holy Ghost*.—And into *this name*, life and power, Peter did

baptize them ; they received it as he spake unto them, which exactly answered the commission, “ *teach baptizing.*”

No marvel, then, that he immediately remembered Christ’s promise, “ ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost”—seeing the baptismal influences thereof, attendant upon his powerful preaching, were so livingly in fulfilment thereof.—Nevertheless, as *water* had been in great estimation, it seems Peter thought best to condescend to the weakness of those young converts, and of his Jewish brethren then present, as his Lord and Master had again and again graciously condescended to *him* in *his* weakness.—So he commanded them to be baptized; and perhaps he could not have done better in their weak state, and especially as none appeared to *forbid* it, which it is probable he might not know but some then present might have *authority* to do; for his mind began now to be considerably *enlarged*; he clearly perceived (which he seems not to have known before) that God was no respecter of persons, of Jew more than Gentile, &c. Indeed the very query, “ can any man forbid water?” &c. Acts x. 47, *is an appeal to men*, and bespeaks a state of hesitation, or uncertainty. Nor is his hesitancy at all to be admired at, things having so wonderfully *altered* in his view in a *short* time past; and the anointing of truth, that brings all things to remembrance, having *just now* revived in his mind the sweet and precious promise of his dear Redeemer—“ John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,” which he could not but *see* and *know* was then through him graciously taking place upon these Gen-

tiles; it is by no means strange that he doubted the propriety of baptizing them in *water*. It had been much stranger, had he not doubted it, especially as *water* was the very thing which our Lord, in the words now brought to Peter's remembrance, had pointedly *opposed* to his own baptism; *that*, as a thing which *had been*; *his own*, as what *should be*: Peter therefore plainly seeing the *latter*, might well doubt the *further* use of the *former*, especially among Gentiles, seeing its very design was that Christ might be manifest to Israel.

Cornelius and his family were not of Israel; and if they had been, why continue the *sign* in presence of the *substance*, unless in condescension to the weakness that could not readily relinquish it? It is evident enough that Peter did not think it *indispensible*, or he would scarcely have put the question at all.—There is very little room in propriety to ask *another* whether that can be *forbidden*, which we know *ourselves* we are indispensibly enjoined and commanded.—Water baptism was not at *that* time in *force*; yet Peter might rationally doubt whether it would give satisfaction to *omit it*, and so might cautiously put the question, to *ascertain* their minds; not really knowing but that some one present might so livingly open its *abolition*, and so satisfyingly declare its non-essentiality, that all the rest would have been perfectly satisfied with the omission of it.—But none doing this, and it being a *new* case, Peter it seems, desirous of getting through safely, and without hurting any *tender mind*, and knowing that his *now* commanding it done need not perpetuate it (nor does

it, any more than James' directing to anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, perpetuates that) but that after mature consideration, and when the state of things would *bear it*, it might be *quite laid aside*, did on this occasion command it to be done; and it might really be safest and best, at that time, so to do; nor was this and the anointing with oil the only ceremonies that were still at times condescendingly used, some time after the abrogation of signs and figures, as to any further obligation.

A well-timed condescension to the weakness of others, is an excellent thing—but let none *now* delight to dwell in the weakness, and therein weakly consider the condescension exercised at a time, wherein it was evidently a very nice and difficult point to know how to proceed so as to hurt no one, either Jew, or Greek; as establishing an ordinance of perpetual obligation under the gospel, that dispensation of life and substance pointed to, by such outward observation. For so far is that condescension from affording any just pretence for such a conclusion, that we have great reason to believe that even Peter himself, soon after this, became quite clear to omit water baptism entirely, as a figurative thing, not belonging to the gospel; for we do not find he *ever* afterwards *once* used or ordered it administered to *any*: but, on the contrary, we *do* find he describes the baptism that now saves us as quite another thing, and as being effected by the *resurrection of Christ the life*, to the answer of a good conscience. And indeed it *must* be so; for the gospel of Christ *is*, and in its own

pure nature *must be*, void of any mere outward and figurative observations—and to hold it forth so, in its genuine purity, and stripped of all these *signs* of both *John* and *Moses*;—we find there was a voice heard out of the cloud, just after Peter's proposal to build *three* tabernacles, at the time of the transfiguration, Mat. xvii. Mark ix. Luke ix. 28, &c. “saying this is my beloved Son, *hear him*,” 35. A very timely admonition indeed, and sufficient, one might suppose, to prevent all who understand it from wishing to build *three tabernacles*, or to retain any of the mere shadows of either Moses or John, as circumcision, the passover, or water baptism, *now*, since they are all ended, and Christ is to be heard in all things.

Whilst the cloud overshadowed them, they were for *three* tabernacles (they knew not that Moses and John must not be retained) but when the divine voice brake through the cloud, they had their attention called *singly* to Jesus. But further, that no confirmation should be wanting, and as it were in order to set it home, and seal it forever, that this was the true intent and meaning of this glorious vision, and of the voice from the excellent glory, we find that immediately upon their hearing said voice, even “suddenly when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save *Jesus only*, with *themselves*.”

Here is the genuine simplicity of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and gospel, beautifully and instructively displayed.—Here those things that were of a *nature*, and in design, to be shaken,

fulfilled and done away, are *removed*; and that *only* which cannot be shaken *remains*. This is *shaking* not the *earth* only; but also *heaven*; not sin, and carnality, and earthly mindedness *alone*; but here a great part of many people's *religion*, and what they think belongs to the very kingdom of *heaven*, and gospel of *Jesus*, are shaken and removed out of the way; yea, things *once* of God himself ordained, as striking shadows of the *good things to come*, but ever by him designed to vanish, in the full presence and enjoyment of the good things themselves. Blessed are they who "have ears to hear," and hearts to understand, and faith to follow the lamb of God wheresoever he leadeth, even to the loss of all their own buildings, their own righteousness, and creaturely performances, till they come to cease from their *own works*, as God did from his.—These shall be established as Mount Sion, that shall never be removed; and being preserved from subjection to, or from touching, tasting or handling, those outward ordinances, which consist in things that perish with the using, shall know the Lord to be *one*, and his *name one*; and living and serving the *one* Lord, in the life, love and victory of the saints' one true faith, shall know assuredly that there is *but one* true gospel baptism, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh (or outward body, which is the work of outward washing) but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."—For these shall know *him* to be "the resurrection and the life" to and *in* their *own* souls: Christ *in them* the hope of glory, and shall have no *hope* or confidence in any outward sprinklings or

dippings, eatings or drinkings, as pertaining to the work of salvation.

The substantial "answer of a good conscience is not known without the resurrection of Christ" *in the soul*; but *this* known in the fulness ever makes "perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;" which yet cannot be experienced but through the putting off the sins of the flesh. "For though the baptism that *saves*, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh," that is, the *outward* filth of the *body*; yet it ever *does* put away the *sinful filth* of the fleshly mind; this is the very work and design of it. Hence its administrator has his *fan* in his *hand*, to winnow the *chaff* from the *wheat*; his *soap*, like the *fuller*, to wash and cleanse away the *filth*; and his *fire*, like the *refiner*, to separate the *dross* from the *gold*; yea, *purely* to purge away *all* the dross, tin, and even reprobate silver, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire; thus *cleansing*, and that *thoroughly*, the very *floor* of the heart.—This is the *baptism* that *saves*, the work of *him* who saves his people *from* their sins," not *in* them. It is therefore altogether beside the true meaning of Peter's words, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh," to suppose he meant that the *saving baptism* he there spake of does not cleanse from *sin*, or put away our *sinful filth*; but that it is an outward ordinance, which must be submitted to, just to answer a good conscience in that particular respect, without any reliance upon it as to sanctification from sin; which construction I have often known it glossed with, by the pleaders for elementary baptism.

But is it not strange, that men of sense should

consent to believe, that the *baptism* which *now saveth us*, doth *not* save us from *sin*, doth not put away the *sinful* filth of the flesh? If Peter spake truth when he said “ baptism doth also now save us,” he must speak of the *one* saving baptism. There never was but *one* thing that could *save*: “ according to his mercy he *saved* us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Where this is livingly witnessed, “ the resurrection and the life” of Christ is always known, and therein “ the answer of a good conscience towards God” takes place, to a degree of unspeakable enjoyment; a fulness of divine consolation, unknown in the performance of mere outward ordinances, and never attained to but by being planted in the likeness of Christ’s *death*, buried with him by true Christian baptism into the *death of sin*, and this death, by the power of the *eternal Spirit*, arising with him in the *power of his resurrection*, and *walking* with him in *newness of life*.

But to return; as those outward things which had been “ imposed until the time of reformation,” and were here exhibited in the transfiguration, as not belonging to the gospel, were not absolutely and entirely out of date till Christ had *risen*: he so far condescended to their continuance, that he did not forbid and prevent his disciples baptizing his followers in *water*; for this was a performance at that time in very great vogue, and Christ well knew how to deal with a people habituated to outward observances. It had all along under the law and Prophets, been found extremely difficult to restrain that people from the idolatries of the Heathen,

even though God had so far accommodated himself or his law to their outward state and disposition, as to provide them with many *signs* and *ceremonies*, “divers washings,” a wordly sanctuary, &c. Heb. ix. 1.

The mind of man once turned to religious exercises, and pressing on therein, is hard to be properly restrained, is very prone to imagery, idolatry, and a great deal of outward show and activity. And from this ground sprung all Pagan idolatry; all advances towards it among the Jews; all continuations of Jewish, Heathenish, or other mere outward *signs* and shadows among Christians, and many absurd and foolish observations among Turks and Mahometans. Christ knew what was in man, and needed none “to testify” unto him “of man,” as appears by John ii. 25. And as he had many things to say unto his disciples, which they could *not* at first *bear* (see John xvi. 12) he advanced them gradually, condescending to their weakness, and attachment to things that belong *not* to, and can have *no* place *in* the pure spirituality of his *kingdom*. This amply accounts for his disciples continuing to baptize many new disciples, as they came to believe on him, and follow him, even after *he* and *John* had in great degree fulfilled that dispensation; a dispensation which probably had never been necessary, but for the dark and untoward state of the people’s minds. And had they *all*, when Christ came, turned their attention rightly to him, and fully understood the inward and spiritual nature of his gospel, there would have been very little if any real use for baptism in *water* afterwards.

A dispensation of signs was ever in condescension to man's weakness; and once indulged, they are apt to obtain too great veneration, and be too long retained: for it is seldom if ever the case, that things highly esteemed, can be dropt all at once suddenly. It is often safer and better, to lead people along gradually from *signs* to *substance*, as they can bear it. Therefore the early followers of the blessed Jesus were tenderly indulged, and all outward things not at once rent from them: for though he plainly taught Luke xvii. 20) that the "kingdom of God cometh not with observation," or as in the margin, "with outward show," yet during the *twilight* of things, or the evening time, wherein, though there was *some light*, yet there was also *some darkness*; things not being yet wholly *clear*, nor wholly *dark*; not yet full and perfect gospel *day* nor altogether *night*. See Zechar. xiv. 6, 7. He might safely, and he did wisely permit things not properly belonging to his kingdom, but which were to *decrease*, and terminate as the sun arose, and the day advanced in its full *clearness* and perfection. And these things, though then only permitted in condescension, too many very sincere, but in this respect weak Christians, have been gleaning up, from that day to this, instead of pressing into the spiritual holy of holies, beyond all *vails*, *signs* and *symbols*.

They puzzle themselves with the Apostles' condescending practices, and would erect these into gospel ordinances, though neither Christ nor any of his Apostles ever enjoined their observance as such. Indeed they were so far be-

neath the spirituality and pure simplicity of the new covenant, which was and is in the heart and inward parts, that the great Mediator thereof never condescended, that we have any account of, to baptize one person with water; it is on the contrary expressly declared, that "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." He well knew why he omitted it; for had he done it, it might have induced his most enlightened followers to continue it, out of veneration to his example; as many now do from that of his disciples, though he himself never once practised nor commanded it; and though Paul thanked God he had baptized so very few. See 1 Cor. i. 14.

As to its permission during the time after it was in a good degree *fulfilled*, till Christ arose from the dead, it might very well be suffered in condescension; for the gospel day and dispensation had not *then* fully come in: all that space was a time of *unfulfilling*: many things of an outward typical nature were during that time fulfilled, and very especially that of the passover, which Christ desired with great desire to eat with his disciples *before* he *suffered*. See Luke xxii. 15. But why was he so earnest to do it *before* he *suffered*?—The reason of this his earnest desire is plain to him "who has ears to hear"—to others it may be a mystery.—Christ could never do it with propriety, unless *before* he suffered; and had he not done it, it would have remained *unfulfilled* as to his actual *fulfilment*, by that special participation of it.—It belonged *only* to the *law*; it vanished with Moses,

as water baptism did with Elias, that is John; hence it behoved Christ, in order to its *fulfilment*, to eat it *before he suffered*; while things were fulfilling; whilst the *outward* and typical things *concerning him were having their end* (see verse 37. of this same chapter) that so having *done away* all these things, he might triumph over them, nailing them to his cross (see Col. ii. 14) and be able on the cross to say as he did, "it is finished," John xix. 30; which he could not have said with equal propriety, had so important a *type* as the passover remained unabolished by him.—And yet many are ignorantly celebrating the passover very frequently, under an idea that Christ, at the very time when he *ended it*, instituted an outward supper of perpetual continuance in his church, which could not possibly be, consistently with the nature of his kingdom, which is an *inward* thing; and therefore, when he sent his disciples to prepare for him to eat the passover, he bid them say, "My time is at hand, I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples," Matt. xxvi. 18. He knew the time was *at hand* for all these things to be abolished, and *have an end*, Luke xxii. 37. He steadily calls it the *passover*, and never, I think, once by any other name; and having eaten it with his disciples, and turned their attention to its mystical signification, to the necessity of their eating his spiritual flesh and drinking his spiritual blood, which, that he might take occasion to do, that they might live by him, was doubtless one great cause of his anxious desire to eat it with them, and just reminded them, in eating the mere *figure*, to do it in remem-

brance of him; he then, as if purposely to show them it belonged not to the gospel, wound up the ceremony, telling them he would not any more eat or drink these outward symbols, nor partake again with them of the passover, till he drank the wine new with them in the kingdom of heaven (see Matt. xxvi.) 29) or until it be *fulfilled* in the kingdom of God, Luke xxii. 16; or, as expressed verse, 18, “until the kingdom of God shall come.” This new wine he drank with them eminently in that holy and spiritual *kingdom*, which they lived to *see come* before they tasted of death, according to his promise on the day of Pentecost and other blessed seasons—continues to drink it *new* in the same glorious kingdom with all that open and let him come in, for he sups with them, and they with him.—And this is the only true celebration of the Lord’s supper—that which is outward is not (and cannot be) to eat the Lord’s supper; for that is spiritual; no such signs and symbols can now have any proper place in Christ’s kingdom—but as he is substantially and experimentally in and with his people to the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20; as he does not leave them comfortless, but cometh unto them, John xiv. 18; as he and his Father make their real and living abode with them (see verse 23) so he eats and drinks with them in his invisible kingdom, where they “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” which can be only *in that kingdom*. There they sit under their own vine and fig-tree, where none can make them afraid.—See Mic. iv. 4. These eat

the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, whereby their souls are made alive.

“What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord,” Jer. xxiii. 28. What is a little bit of outward bread, and a cup of wine, at best taken by way of remembrance, to the real *supper* of the Lord, which all the saints partake of, and live by? and what if Christ did tell his disciples, as they then ate the outward sign, to do it in *remembrance* of him, Luke xxii. 19; and what if Paul told them, as often as they did so they showed the Lord’s death till he came,” 1 Cor. xi. 26: surely that makes no institution of a perpetual outward ordinance in the church of Christ. It was a matter of liberty and choice, whether after that once they ate it or not; and that but until the Lord *came*, according to his promise that he would not leave them comfortless, but would come unto them. And surely they greatly miss the true end and design of it, who are still in these days eating and drinking the outward *figure*, not discerning the Lord’s spiritual body, nor partaking of that divine flesh and blood that gives life, nourishment, and vigour to the soul: for if this was their happy experience, and enjoyment in the presence, company and kingdom of the Lord, with true, living and sensible discernment of his body, and that spiritually broken for them, and of his spiritual blood, livingly and life-givingly shed for them; why should they still be eating the *old*, long-ceased symbols of it in remembrance of a *present* Lord and Saviour? Does not this practice bespeak Christ’s real absence to their souls, or their non-

discernment of his spiritual body? Let the wise in heart among them ponder it well.

But now to return to water baptism: I was mentioning that it might be continued till Christ's resurrection, with some kind of indulgent propriety—and accordingly we find, that as they came down from the mountain (after the transfiguration) he (Christ) charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead," Mark ix. 9. The vision looked forward to *that time*, for the full completion of the things it was designed to exhibit—and therefore this very *silence* enjoined on them till that time, is a further and loud confirmation that the foregoing is the genuine import and meaning of the whole vision.—But further "they asked him, saying, why say the scribes that Elias must first come?" verse 11. "And he answered and told them, Elias verily first cometh and restoreth all things," verse 12: "but I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come," verse 13; or, as Matthew has it, chap. xvii. verse 12, 13, "but I say unto you, that Elias has come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them"—then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.—Thus clear is it that John the Baptist was Elias, who had thus appeared and disappeared in the mount with them.—On the whole, it is evident to thoroughly enlightened minds as any doctrine in the gospel, that neither water baptism, eating material bread and wine, nor

any other mere outward performance, can possibly in the nature of things have any place as standing ordinances in the church and kingdom of Christ.—Christ's coming was designed to put an end to all these things—and therefore the eating, drinking, washing and purification which remain in the gospel state, are *all* inward and spiritual, and can be no otherwise.—The *one* gospel baptism is not that which puts away the outward filth of the flesh (which is all that water can do) but it is that which actually *saves us*, and brings to “the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 1 Pet. iii. 21.—This no *figure* could or ever can do—though such as continue under the signs of former dispensations would have us believe, that the Apostle here affirms that *a figure* saves us, by the resurrection of Christ.—Whereas there never was and never can be but one thing that saves the soul—and that is the inward purifying baptism of the Holy Ghost—as Titus iii. 5, “according to his mercy he *saved us*, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—Here is something that changes, regenerates and renews the soul; well may this be said to be saving: and as this “washing of water by the *word*,” spiritually saves the soul, how natural is Peter's comparison of an outward salvation, in an outward ark, on the outward water, to this inward salvation, by inward and spiritual water, in the inward and spiritual ark of the everlasting covenant. See Rev. xi. 19. “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the *ark* of his testament,” &c.—If Christians would *wait to*

see the temple of God thus spiritually opened in heaven, they would come to know *this ark*—and would rejoice in the salvation therein experienced; and would know it to be as impossible for *one* sign or figure to *save the soul as another*; that outward water can no more be *sanctified to the washing away sin*, than the “blood of bulls and of goats,” which the Apostle says plainly is impossible, Heb. x. 4, “for it is not possible that the “blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”—and it will forever remain as impossible for *outward washing* to do it—and therefore Peter wisely adds, after mentioning the baptism that *now saves us*, “not the putting away the filth of the flesh;” for he had now learned, whatever he had when he visited Cornelius, and it is likely he pretty well knew it then, that outward water could not wash away sin, nor “make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the conscience,” any more than the other signs and *divers washings* under the law; and therefore having mentioned *outward water* in the preceding verse, lest any should ignorantly suppose he meant *outward water*, in speaking of the baptism which now saves us, he carefully and immediately distinguishes, and declares he did not mean any outward cleansing, but something which really doth save; and he asserts it to be “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” as that which, livingly known in us, “the resurrection and the life,” brings to the comfortable answer of a good conscience; and nothing else ever can—for “the law made nothing perfect,” as pertaining to the conscience; For, it having a shadow of good things to come,

and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect; for then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins, Heb. x. 1, 2.

Here we see those outward sacrifices and washings, “the shadows of good things to come,” could never purge the conscience *then*; nor can any outward baptisms, nor all the waters of Jordan, *any more* do it *now*; and therefore Peter, speaking of the *baptism which now saves us*, brings it home to that which alone can truly *purge the conscience*, and “make the comers thereunto perfect”—to wit, the bringing in of a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God, Heb. vii. 19. Here we “lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope, (says the Apostle) we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail,” chap. vi. 18, 19. This is “Christ in us the hope of glory.” See Col. i. 27. This is known only where Christ is “the resurrection and the life” experimentally to the soul, as before observed. Here *alone* is the *answer of a good conscience*; hereby *indeed* “we draw nigh unto God,” and this is all within, and is the experience of such only whose *understandings* are so *enlightened* as to “know what is the *hope* of this calling, and what the *riches* of the *glory* of his inheritance in the saints,” Eph. i. 18.

CHAPTER III.

All old things done away in the gospel state. Signs and shadows ceased. Their use was from men's alienation from Christ; the law being added because of transgression. Christ in men, the life of all dispensations. All change in these, but in accommodation to the change in men. Shadows but imposed until the time of reformation. The way into the holiest of all not manifest, whilst the first tabernacle was standing, and the mind resting in outward ordinances. Water baptism was under the first covenant, and *no part* of the second. Hence the least, purely under the second, is greater than John, as John the Baptist. As Moses gave place to Joshua, so John to Jesus. Moses entered not into Canaan; nor John, *as the Baptist* into the purely spiritual kingdom. Signs and figures make none perfect. Hence there is a disannulling of all these for their *weakness*. It is idle to suppose one set of ceremonials abolished, to make way for others as gospel ordinances. Christ commissions his disciples, at Galilee, to baptize into the very name, the *life* and *power* of God; not as a separate act, but by their powerful gospel ministry. *They were to teach baptizingly.*

AS I have long seen with sorrow, how the *shadows* detain people from the *substance*, and how hard many strive, even against lively convictions to the contrary, at times, and greatly to their own loss, in regard to the true *riches*, glory and *inheritance* of and *in* the saints, to make these *outward things* answer, as a substitute, instead of *inward substance*; I am in earnest to assist them, if possible, in the necessary discovery that these things have long ago ceased, as to *their proper use*; and can have no

proper place in the full sunshine of the gospel day.—Bear with me, therefore, friendly reader, whilst I further show how “all old things” (signs and ceremonies) “are passed away” to all thorough Christians—“all things are” (to these) “become new; all things are of God,” 2 Cor. xvii. 18.

Now it is clear to me, “all old things” are not passed away, in the experience of any who are continuing in the religious use of outward bread, wine, water, or any of the old figurative things of the former dispensations. The law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, Gal. iii. xix. If man had not transgressed against the light of Christ shining in the heart, and enlightening “every man that cometh into the world” (John i.) I suppose no outward written law had ever been necessary. Were not the minds of men alienated from the life and government of Christ in the soul, where the kingdom of heaven is (for Christ declares it is *within*) none of the signs, either of John’s or of the Mosaic dispensation, had ever been found needful. These were only as a schoolmaster, to lead the mind back from its wanderings “to Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;” the change is only in us—and all the change of dispensations, from first to last, is in accommodation and condescension to the changing and changed state of men.—Christ was “before Abraham,” and was and is all the real life, in and under every dispensation; and those outward things were only “imposed on them until the time of reformation,” (Heb. ix. 10.)

until a return to that from which the mind was estranged—for in that estranged, bewildered and outward literal state of mind, the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest ;” for the *first*, the outward “ tabernacle, was yet standing,” verse 8 ; and the mind in this state was still disposed to stop and rest in the outward tabernacle, and in the shadow of *the first covenant*, “ which had many ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.” See verse 1. Here the outward worshippers rested secure, although this tabernacle was but “ *a figure for the time then present*, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, which stood only (let it be duly noticed) in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them, until the time of reformation,” verse 10. But none of these things belong to the gospel, or times of real reformation, and full return to the life and substance, which was of old, before ever the outward law was written, amply sufficient for all that would keep to it. But men departing from *this*, and *rebell*ing against the light, they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof, Job xxiv. 13. And in this alienated and rebellious state “ the law entered, that the offence might abound,” Rom. v. 20 ; for God, in gracious condescension to man thus *darkened*, and wandering from the sure guide, was pleased to meet him in things more outward, to *arrest* his attention, and make him sensible of the *offensiveness* of his state and condition ; that so, if it might by

any means be effected, he might turn to the Lord and find him a Saviour. Hence the law entered with many very significant ceremonies and services, pointing out man's need of purification, forgiveness, and restoration. All this was to serve as a "schoolmaster to lead to Christ." It not only pointed to him as then yet to come a great way off, or a long time hence; but it pointed to him also *directly*, as then at hand, *in* and *among* them, if they would have known and attended to him. For, says Moses (Deut. xxx. 11, &c.) "this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? but the *word* is very nigh *thee*, in thy mouth and in thy *heart*, that thou mayest do it." And, verse 20, he presseth it upon them to love and *cleave unto the Lord*, assuring them thus; "for he is thy life, and the length of thy days."

Thus did Moses point out the word *near and in them*, and referred them plainly to the Lord himself, as *the life* to their souls. And Paul tells the Romans, x. 8, that this *word* which Moses tells Israel was *near and in them*, "is the word of faith, which we preach." And in the preceding verses expressly declares this to be the "righteousness of faith; and that it speaketh on this wise, "say not in thine heart, who

shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead") &c. Hence it is clear, that the *life of Christ the Lord* near them, and even *in them*, was what Moses meant to point them to, and wished them to love and cleave unto, and which was nothing less than the true and living *word of faith* which the Apostles preached. This, as before hinted, has been the *real life* of all dispensations; and when and where the true *reformation*, return, and cleaving unto *this*, hearing and doing it, takes place in purity and fulness, "all old things are passed away." The *shadows* vanish before the *light*, and the *elements melt with the fervent heat* of the gospel sun.

These things could never have been designed for perpetual continuance in the gospel state, but only to lead unto it. "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second," Heb. viii. 7. John's baptism, as well as the passover, was under the *first* covenant, and no proper *part* of the *second*. Had it been part of the *second*, how could Christ have testified, as before noticed, that though among them that were born of women, there had not risen a greater than John the *Baptist*, notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he? Mat xi. 11: but the reason is now plain, as already evinced, why the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than *he*, to wit, that both *he*, as John the *Baptist*, and his *baptism* belonged not to the *second* covenant; and that therefore, as John the

Baptist, he was but the *administrator* of a baptism that has no proper place in Christ's spiritual kingdom ; to the *least*, in the purity of which, "all old things are passed away." This *state* is evidently *greater*, as has been observed already, than that of John, as the *baptizer* in outward water, in which *capacity* he is here spoken of ; and as such he was to *decrease*, and his *baptism* to give place to Christ's.

As a saint and servant of God, he was *never* to decrease, but to "increase with the increase of God ; but his dispensation, his baptism, was ever *designed* to decrease, and be *fulfilled*. And I think it will be granted, that the least in the pure kingdom of life and substance is, and must be, in the nature of things, greater than any ever *could* be in the mere administration of a decreasing and terminating institution.

John was doubtless, as a Christian (and such there have been in all ages—Abraham was eminently one) great in the kingdom of heaven—but this was not as John the Baptist ; as *such*, he came to but did not *enter* the kingdom, nor *belong to it*—he saw it with his *eyes*, and *knew*, and pointed to the *Lord of it* : but as Moses went not over Jordan, though he did much towards leading Israel to their inheritance, but gave place to Joshua, whose name, like that of Jesus, signifies a Saviour, and who conducted them after Moses into the good land ; so John the Baptist, as such, could not belong to the purely spiritual kingdom of our Lord ; but gave place to *him*, the anointed Saviour who baptizeth every mem-

ber and subject of his church and kingdom *into* the very *life* and power of the kingdom, which "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. And seeing John's baptism was no part of the *second covenant*, but was *under the first*, and its proper use was only whilst the *first tabernacle* was *standing*—it is equally disannulled by the abolishing of the first covenant, and removal of the first tabernacle, with the other figurative observations; and for the same reason was this disannulled, as were the others, viz. its insufficiency, weakness, and utter inability to make perfect the comers thereunto. "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment, going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God," Heb. vii. 18, 19. Here we see that which went before the new covenant state was, for its weakness and unprofitableness in making perfect, disannulled; and surely John's ministration and baptism *went before* that state, and were designed expressly to *prepare for it*. I marvel that Christians do not see it, and press on beyond it. It is idle to suppose one set of signs and ceremonies *disannulled* for their *weakness*, and another set introduced as perpetual ordinances in the gospel state—we do not read, that, "finding fault" with the rites, figures and ordinances of the first covenant, God ordained water-washing, and eating and drinking bread and wine, as more permanent and perpetual institutions of the new or second covenant.—Nay, verily, he finds fault equally

with all things in their own nature equally partaking of the same *weakness*.—Both were of divine institution for a time, and equally weak and liable to a *necessary* abrogation; and being both typical, there was no more perpetual permanency in the one than the other, neither in themselves, nor in their institution—and of the Mosaic institutions, it is expressly said, “finding fault with them, he saith, behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah,” Heb. viii. 8. Now what was this new *covenant*? It was intended to supersede and supply the defects of the *old*; but there is not one word of any of those outward ordinances in it.—They are all old things; and however extolled by many good men, belong to the old covenant forever. So that the ceremonies of the law are as much gospel ordinances as water baptism, or bread and wine.

The new covenant is altogether inward and spiritual. “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people,” &c. verse 10. “Christ has not entered into the holy places, made with hands, which *are the figures of the true*,” Heb. ix. 24. Nor ought we, if we would become completely his followers, to continue in the *figurative washings*, any more than in the *figurative offerings* and old ceremonious worship of that temple, which was but a *figure of the true*.—“The priesthood being

changed, there is made of *necessity* a change also of the law," vii. 12. It behoved that the *baptisms* accompanying the first priesthood, the worldly tabernacle, and holy places made with hands, should, *like them*, be *outward*; but now the *law* being *changed*, and the covenant written in the *heart*, a spiritual baptism alone can be proper, and accordingly is the one only baptism of the gospel—for if it was necessary "that the patterns of the heavenly things," these being outward, should be *figuratively* purified with outward sprinklings, washings, &c. surely it is as necessary that the heavenly things themselves be purified with better sacrifices and washings than these. See Heb. ix. 23. I think if the veil were done away in the experience of Christians—they might in this one text, Heb. x. 5, "when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me," read clearly the dismissal of all figurative atonements and purifications.—All the sacrifices and offerings "he taketh away"—as the first things, "that he may establish the second"—that is, "lo I come to do thy will, O God."—This must be done in all the seed; and this is the thing that remaineth forever—established under the gospel.—The scope of the Apostle's reasoning in this chapter, against the continuation of the "shadows of the good things to come," is from their *weakness*, their impropriety and uselessness, where the substance is known—and thus he argues, that where remission of sins is obtained, there is no more offering for sin. See verse 18. Why then continue a baptism that was expressly unto repent-

ance, for the remission of sins, if we have obtained remission? Paul brings in the new covenant written in the heart—and the remission of sins attending it. “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;” and in the very next words forms the above conclusion. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.—And after he gets through with the argument, instead of urging any outward baptisms or figurative observations, he pressingly enjoins love, good works, holding fast, not drawing back, not neglecting assembling, not to cast away confidence, patience, &c.—Can any thing be plainer, than that such care and constancy in faith, patience, and godly walking, according to the writing of the new covenant, are the weighty matters of the gospel dispensation in Paul’s estimation? that as he was not sent to baptize with water, so he never in all his writing enjoins it, nor reproves for its omission.—He speaks of the believers, not as being then exercised in the terrible things at Sinai, but as come to the excellent things of Mount Sion—“the heavenly Jerusalem—to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; to the blood of sprinkling,” &c.—This is all sufficient without the figures—and so he shows the removal of all else. “Yet once more I shake not the earth only; but also heaven”—this is the removal of things that are shaken—“that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” “Wherefore” (says he) “we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

See about the latter half of chapter xii. and xiii. 9. He subjoins, "be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established *with grace*; *not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*"—Did he not mean these *elementary* things, by the *strange doctrines*? if not, why does he so immediately propose *grace* as the means of establishment, and discountenance *meats* as unprofitable? and what means the *altar* in the next verse, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle? is not this *altar* and that which is *eaten*, by the *we*, who *have* it, and have a right to eat of it, something belonging to the *kingdom* they have *received which cannot be shaken*? and are not the meats, drinkings and washings, that are *unprofitable*, the things that are shaken? and why is the *shaking* and *removal* of these, called *shaking heaven*? is it not plainly because these are things that had pertained to devotion and religious services, and were yet urged as such by too many? and can any thing remain of a ceremonial nature, where this heaven is thoroughly shaken, where all old things are done away, and all things become *new*, according to the *new and living way* of the gospel?—This epistle is supposed to have been written in the year sixty-four; so that there had been a pretty full time of trial what *was* and what was *not profitable to those who had been occupied in them.*—And we find here many good things inculcated and enjoined, but ceremonials are rejected, as pertaining to the first covenant, and as *now* shaken and *removed.*—And is it not truly worthy of remark,

that John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, who is supposed to have written his history of Christ's life and doctrines many years after his ascension, makes no mention at all of our Saviour's conduct at the eating of the *passover*, in regard to the disciples' eating and drinking in remembrance of him—but relates very circumstantially his other conduct of washing the disciples' feet, and the instructive lesson couched in it?

May we not fairly conclude, that as the only proper time of the disciples' eating and drinking in remembrance of Christ, was but until his coming again, the Comforter to take up his abode with them, and lead and guide them into all truth; and as this season was long elapsed, when John wrote, that therefore, he thinking it of no use to mention it, passed it in total silence, as one of the many things which Jesus truly did, but which are not noticed in his history? We find him very careful in correcting a hearsay report, which might, if believed, tend to lead people into outward observances, which he appears not to have relied on, nor inculcated in all his writings. The report I allude to is that, by the spreading whereof "the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and *baptized* more disciples than John" the Baptist. This mistake the beloved disciple, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, and having near access to his heart, knew much of his mind and will, takes special care to rectify, by a full declaration that "Jesus himself baptized *not*, but his disciples." Observing this general omission of things not essential, and

his great care to transmit down to posterity many heavenly and truly evangelical and deeply interesting sayings, exhortations and divine intimations of the blessed Jesus; I have been ready to suppose his whole aim, in mentioning water baptism *at all*, was just to do John the Baptist and the Pharisees justice; properly introduce Jesus as *increasing*, and John as *decreasing*; carefully record John's repeated mention of *water*, as peculiar to *his* baptism, in direct contradistinction to Christ's; and *pointedly* to contradict the *mistaken* opinion, that Christ baptized in water.

John knew very well the disciples *did so*, and doubtless knew on *what ground* it was. Let any one read carefully his evangelical history and epistles, and observe his almost total silence about many things related by others, and how he abounds in the mention of deep spiritual matters; and see if it does not greatly favour the opinion, that John saw the abundant need of preserving and inculcating things of an inward, living, spiritual import and concernment, and divine nature: he aimed at *life* and *substance* and carefully retained what is most livingly expressive of it, and what tends most immediately to promote the knowledge of it among men. In his epistles he dwells almost entirely on things really essential: he makes the old commandment, the *word* they had "heard from the beginning"—and the new, "which thing" (says he) "is true in him and in you," to centre in the doctrine of the *true light* that now shineth, 1 John, ii. 7, 8. And his advices

are to faithfulness in *keeping* and abiding in the holy *word*, to love and good works; but not a word of exhortation to ceremonials.—And may we not fairly conclude, both water baptism, and the bread and wine, were much laid aside, or very little relied upon or inculcated, at the late period at which this beloved disciple wrote?

CHAPTER IV.

Christ's baptism is *into the name*, i. e. life and *power* of the Godhead. So his commission to his disciples to administer it, could not be executed but by divine power. They waiting for, received *this*, and baptized others with it. All Gospel preaching is herein, and in its nature is baptizing. Christ's baptism effects *entire* sanctification. John's a lively *type* of it, being *all over*, in water. It shewed the need of cleansing and remission, but effected neither. Christ's alone can. John constantly distinguishes *his* from Christ's, by the word *water*. Christ baptized none in water, nor ordered it (that appears) but doubtless would, had it been his baptism. None of the prophecies point him out so baptizing, but as effecting inward changes. Disciples' use of water no more perpetuates it, than their use of circumcision, anointing with oil, vows, &c. do them. Paul's commission full, yet he thanks God he baptized so few. Council at Jerusalem did not advise water, bread or wine.

Let us now attend more particularly to the great baptismal commission, Mat. 28. The 18th verse introduceth it thus: "and Jesus came and spake unto them, saying all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." A very proper introduction to command attention, inspire confidence, and show them whence their whole qualification *to teach baptizingly* was to proceed. 19th, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them *eis to onoma, into the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." 20th, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end

of the world. Amen." Observe he says, "go ye *therefore*;" that is, *because* "I have all power," and can and will qualify you so to *teach*, in my own *life* and *power*, as thereby to baptize the people *into* the very *name*, the power, virtue and life, of the Divinity. Observe further, the commission is not *teach*, and baptize, as two distinct acts; but *teach baptizing*. And, as *such* a work might seem almost too great for their *faith*, he adds that he (who had *all power*) would be with them in the work, and that to the end of the world.

It is plain that this commission, as it enjoins a very special kind of *teaching*, such as should *baptize* the people into true *discipleship*, as members of the body, the church of Christ; so it could not be executed but by a supernatural assistance received from on high. "Behold" (said Christ) "I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," Luke xxiv. 49. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," Acts i. v. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," verse 8. Thus evident it is, that their being living witnesses of Christ depended on the *power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them*: and that they could never administer his baptism, till they were thereby so endued, as to *teach baptizing* into the same Spirit

themselves were baptized with.—This *baptism into the name*, they in due time so eminently received, as they waited for it according to direction—"with one accord in one place," Acts ii. 1; that is probably in silent retirement, waiting upon God; that in the power thereof they taught with such *baptizing* efficacy, that multitudes were *pricked in their heart*, Acts ii. 37. *The Holy Ghost fell upon them which heard the word*, chap. x. 44. Their very enemies were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which they spake, as chap. vi. 10. Thus truly "with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus," chap. iv. 33. And thus they preached the gospel unto the people, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," 1 Peter i. 12. No wonder then it *fell* on those who in *true faith*, that was of the operation of God, received the *word*, and gladly embraced the *gospel*. Christ promised, "he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive," John vii. 38, 39. And what can be more natural than for it to flow *into* others, as it flows *out of them*? especially as Christ's express direction was, "freely ye have received, freely give." It seems the Spirit not only flows *into*, and continues to flow *in the hearts* of true believers, but more or less flows *out of them* upon *others*; for they are, as Christ testifies, the "light of the world," Matt. v. 14; "the salt of the earth," 13; "a city set upon an hill," 14, &c. He promised to make his disciples "fishers of men."

Some affirm, no man can baptize with the Holy Ghost—truly none can, in his own time and ability; nor can any preach the gospel but by *divine assistance*. All true gospel ministry is in the life of the Son of God, and wherever it proves effectual to the conversion of souls, it is a *baptizing ministry*. None are *fishers of men*, but who are *made* so by Christ: learning and eloquence may amuse, but it is the *Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven* that makes gospel preachers. This sheds itself *through such* in a blessed diffusion upon *others*, oft-times, in a very lively, instructive and soul-benefiting manner. And this is a thing as experimentally known, where the real gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, is preached in the life, evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with power, as any gospel experience whatever; and it is strange to hear Christians deny it.

Does the preaching of the gospel in our day succeed or not to the real benefit of souls? If *not*, it is useless. If it does, *what* causes the benefit? Is it of *God*, or of *man*? Art thou so vain, oh! man, as to think thou canst do any spiritual good of thyself, unassisted by the spirit of Christ? If this is thy idea, thou art no true gospel minister; for they know they can do nothing of themselves.—If thou art sensible of the help, life and assistance of the holy Spirit in thy ministry, and of a divine and beneficial influence on the minds of those who partake of it, thou mayest rest assured, that so far as it is truly so, it is through the operation of the Holy Ghost on their hearts; and whatever be the de-

gree of *this*, more or less, thy ministry is so far, and no further, a baptizing ministry; so far, and no further, it is truly the ministry of the gospel. And it is thus, and only thus, that it pleaseth "God, through the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21.—It is very unlikely that any should be *saved* through preaching unless *thereby* baptized with the *one saving baptism*; for nothing else ever can *save*. Hence clear it is, that through true gospel preaching, *this* baptism is administered to them that *believe*; the word preached being mixed with *faith* in them that hear it. And no ministry that is not in its own nature, life and influence, *baptizing*, is in any degree the genuine ministry of the gospel.—But, thanks be unto God, there is yet preserved a living, powerful and heart-baptizing ministry; and many are the living witnesses of it, and of its blessed effects.—And I am well confirmed, that no rightly qualified gospel minister can doubt of the baptizing influence of right ministry. He who knows Christ, living, acting and speaking in him, knows that which alone baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire. "I in them, and thou in me," says Christ to his Father, John xvii. 23. And many other texts declare *Christ in us*; and true and blessed experience indubitably confirms it. What then can be too hard for his ministers, in and under his influence? Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13. But Christ himself puts the matter beyond all reasonable dispute, John xiv. 12; and he asserts it with "a verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do he shall do; and greater works

than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." Hence Paul says, "I have begotten you, through the gospel," 1 Cor. iv. 15; and speaks of imparting spiritual gifts, Rom. i. 11. Hence, on the laying on of the Apostles hands, "the Holy Ghost was given," Acts viii. 18. Hence, as Peter began to speak to the household of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost *fell on them*. And hence Christ says (in consideration that it was *he* who spake *in* his disciples, and his Father *in him*, and so *in them*) "he that receiveth *you*, receiveth *me*; and he that receiveth *me*, receiveth *him* that sent me," Mat. x. 40. On this ground Paul calls himself "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles; ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being *sanctified by the Holy Ghost*," Rom. xv. 16. And verse 18 he adds, "for I will not dare to speak of any of these things, which Christ hath not wrought *by me*." Well then might he speak of *ministering the gospel*, which is the *power of God*; seeing it was *all* the work of Christ *by him*, and resulted in *sanctification, by the Holy Ghost*, the baptizing power of the gospel. Indeed the very design of the gospel ministry is to open people's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi. 18.

This ministry lays the *axe* to the *root* of the *corrupt trees* in men's hearts, and therein is executing the very work of Christ. It is truly Christ that does the work but he works *much* by instruments: John was a *great* instrument in his hand; his ministry was very useful in helping to

kindle that fire which was to burn up the *chaff*. He powerfully taught the necessity of this fiery baptism, and of renouncing all dependence on being Abraham's children. This was a good beginning, and was a very necessary *preparation* for Christ, who had afterwards still further, and pressingly too, to combat and alarm that disposition, perhaps as prevalent *now* as at *that day*; and that among too many professing Christians, may I not say, of all denominations? I belong to this or that reformed and truly religious society; we are in the *true faith* and practice of the *Apostles*. Here thousands stick in a *lifeless* profession, as to *themselves*; and yet imagine themselves the true *seed* and offspring of Abraham, spiritually. And it is very hard removing them from their strong holds, or making them sensible of the need of the *axe* and the *fire*. John's ministry was to such, doubtless, truly awakening. And then, as already observed, his dipping them, not *partly*, but *all over* in water, was a lively and very striking representation of the baptism whereby Christ *thoroughly* cleanseth the floor of the heart. And to point out *this*, and to enkindle a desire to experience it, was all that outward dipping could do, save to wash away the outward filth of the flesh. It could do nothing in itself towards real remission of sins; that is the work of Christ, and the soul is brought to experience it through *his baptism*. Hence John was very careful to prevent the idea of his own baptism being saving. He never *once* speaks of it, that I recollect, but he adds the word *water*, to turn the mind from resting in it, as a thing in any wise profitable, further than as it represented

a *perfect* cleansing and purification by *Christ's*; and engaged them to press after it. I indeed baptize you with *water*, but *Christ* shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire, and thereby cleanse you thoroughly *within*, as I wash, or dip you all over *outwardly*, is the import of John's testimony. And *three* times, in *eight* verses, speaking of his own baptism, he *every time* carefully adds the word *water*, in contradistinction to *Christ's*. First, being examined why he baptized, if he was not *Christ*, *Elias*, nor that prophet; it seems he thought it apology enough to tell them, John i. 26, "I baptize with *water*;" and refer them to *Christ* for *gospel* baptism, that is of the Holy Ghost. For outward water being *no part* of *Christ's* baptism, but being long before then in some sort practiced among the Jews, it was no intrusion into *Christ's office* for John to baptize with it. So that this short answer of John, that he only baptized *with water* (an old practice) an *outward*, and comparatively a *low thing*, entirely *different* from *Christ's* baptism, and *no part* of it, was amply sufficient to exculpate John from any just imputation of meddling with things too high for him, or belonging to another. But further to evince how careful John was to keep up the distinction that forever exists, in the very *ground* and nature of them, between his baptism and *Christ's*—we find that in the 31st verse he again dwells on or repeats this important distinction, by the word *water*, "that he should be made manifest to *Israel*, therefore am I come baptizing with *water*," and no further on than the next verse but one, the 33d, he again holds up the same distinction:

“he that sent me to baptize with *water*, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” —One would think this three-fold testimony, all in so short a time, might satisfy every sober mind, that *water baptism*, and that of *Christ*, are entirely two distinct and separate things; and more especially, as touching *water*, it is very particularly recorded that Jesus himself baptized not. He might and did, with a great deal of wisdom and condescending goodness, as noted before, allow his disciples to do it, in that weak and early state and stage of things, before all the shadows could well be laid aside, their minds not being then able to bear it: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now,” John xvi. 12. And as the disciples did, through this all-wise permission, baptize considerable numbers, and that upon their faith in and following Jesus, and becoming his disciples, it was but natural for the people to consider it as if Christ had done it himself. Nor is it at all strange therefore that “the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples”) John iv. 1, 2. And as what a man does by others, he is often called the doer of; so the people then (supposing the disciples baptized by Christ’s authority and commission, because they were his disciples and followers whom they so baptized) said he *baptized*; but it is clear enough that *he* only suffered it, and that in condescension; nor do I believe it would ever have been so carefully re-

corded that *he himself baptized not*, had outward *water* been any part of his baptism; but his baptism being quite another thing, he saw it proper wholly to avoid ministering *outward water* as an ordinance; and that probably lest it should countenance an idea that it belonged to his gospel and kingdom; and so strengthen the already too strong attachment of the people to things outward; and to prevent this in after times, it was also proper that it should be expressly recorded that “Jesus himself baptized not;” and in confirmation of these sentiments it may be observed, that he never once on any occasion enjoined it on any to baptize, or be baptized, in water—we read particularly what he *did*, and what he *ordered done*, on divers particular occasions. Many believed on him, many he healed, and cast out devils: but never a word that he either baptized any of these, or ordered them baptized in water.—We read expressly, that he directed one to go and offer for his cleansing “the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them,” Mat. viii. 4. Another he ordered to “go wash in the pool of Siloam,” John ix. 7: but not an instance of any one ordered by him to be baptized by another in water. But had water baptism been *his*, or any part of his *gospel*, it would have been a strange thing indeed had he never vouchsafed once to administer it, nor order it done on any of the multitudes that believed on him, or out of whom he cast devils, or whom he healed. And even this omission alone, it prevailing throughout the whole history of his life, both before and after his resurrection,

were in my view sufficient to overthrow the notion of water baptism being a gospel ordinance.

What! appoint a solemn ordinance, even a sacrament (as some call it) of perpetual obligation in the church, and never once deign to administer it, or order it administered to any individual, among all the thousands who became his disciples? This were strange indeed; and to me is quite incredible, and inadmissible. Indeed among all the very pointed and remarkable prophecies concerning Christ, there is not one in all the Old Testament that points him out as the administrator of *water baptism*, or as establishing a church or kingdom accompanied with any such outward ordinances. The Father, by Isaiah, speaks of him as the Lord's Elect, in whom his soul delighteth; declaring, Is. xlii. 1, "I have put my Spirit upon him"—giving him "for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners, and them that sit in darkness," &c. and further, "behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. But not a word, among all these *new things*, of his baptizing in outward water. *His* work was to bring forth judgment unto truth, enlighten the Gentiles, bring out of prison and darkness, "bring the blind by a way they knew not," an inward spiritual way; not the way of signs, shadows, and outward ordinances—these were *the old things*.—"I will lead them in paths that they have not known." These are *inward*.

Again, Is. iii. 13, "behold my servant shall deal prudently," &c.—15, "so shall he sprinkle many nations," &c. He was indeed more truly wise and prudent, than to practise or esteem outward sprinkling or dipping as a gospel ordinance; his is a spiritual sprinkling, as explained Ez. xxxvi. 25, "then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," The 26th and 27th verses promise a new heart, and new spirit—the Lord's Spirit put within them. Such things as these did the prophets foretel—but not once in all their predictions, of return, reformation, restoration, and building the waste places, and the like, do they ever mention or hint at Christ's baptizing with water, or establishing any such kind of shadowy institutions in his glorious gospel Church. Nor did Christ, when he came, ever once, that we read of, call that of water his baptism. Indeed it is never once so called in all the Bible, that I can find. And, moreover, I do not find that Christ ever called it by any other name than John's baptism. And is it not wonderful, that he should constantly, and as often as he spake of *water baptism*, call it *John's*, if it was as truly his *own*, as *John's*? Or how can we suppose he ordained it as a standing ordinance in his church, and yet never mentioned it once as such?—Why should he leave his followers, to the world's end, under the great difficulties and disadvantages of such a total silence, if he willed them to use it as his baptism? Was Moses more faithful in his house, than Christ in his? Moses was very particular in describing the rituals of the law, even to very minute circumstances: and would Christ ordain

a perpetual institution, and never once call it his *own* but always call it *John's* ? He knew very well that both himself, John, and others, called and understood *water baptism* to be *John's*. He also knew his own was repeatedly placed in direct contradistinction to it—and said to be with the Holy Ghost. So that in commissioning his disciples to administer his own baptism, there was no need to describe it over again; for it had been so often expressly defined, and distinguished from that of *water*, that he might well suppose no real disciple of his need be at a loss to know what he meant by the word *baptizing* in his great gospel commission—and especially after having so abundantly, and on so many occasions, taught them the inward and spiritual nature of his kingdom, and so repeatedly turned their minds from outward observations, to inward realities.

But had he instituted water baptism, after all this, as a gospel ordinance, it would have been highly requisite for him to have expressed it to be water, in the most particular manner—much more so than if his baptism had never been named as different from water. He might well know his followers would be apt to conclude he instituted his *own* baptism, and not one which had so repeatedly been expressly distinguished therefrom. He might well know that those whose minds were, at least in degree, opened by his repeated endeavours to turn them from things outward to things inward, from signs to substance, would not be unlikely to understand his words to mean spiritually; instead of turning

back, to suppose him now at last bringing them in bondage to weak and beggarly elements. He had comforted their sorrowful souls with a promise of coming again to them in spirit, and taking up his *abode with them*, and thus remaining with them to the end of the world.—Almost every thing he had said to them, for some time past, had tended directly, and indeed been by him designed, to lead inward, and to a spiritual discerning and understanding of things; so that had he now, just before he left them, turned back, and in direct contradiction to the very nature of his gospel and kingdom, and to the whole scope and tenor of his own excellent parables and discourses, instituted an outward baptism or supper, it might surely be expected he would have told them expressly what he intended—nor can I suppose he would by any means have omitted it.—I am so well assured of the spirituality of the gospel, and of Christ's doctrines and discourses, that I cannot entertain the least idea, but that had he established outward signs, he would have very explicitly declared them *to be* outward.—Others may think otherwise. But though I have great charity and good-will for many who adhere to those signs, I cannot but think, that were they come to have a full view of the purity of the gospel state, and a clear understanding of the drift and design of Christ's many hints, intimations, and heavenly communications to his disciples, they must see the total abolition of all the mere rituals, both of John and of Moses.

It is often urged, that Christ's disciples baptized in water. I conceive this no more per-

petuates water baptism, than their circumcising, purifying, shaving, vows, anointing the sick with oil, abstaining from blood and from things strangled, perpetuate these things in the church. —These two last were expressly enjoined by the elders, even upon the *Gentiles*, and that after deliberate consideration and debate, at the time of the great Council at Jerusalem, Acts 15, though at the same time, through assistance of the Holy Ghost, they decreed against circumcising the *Gentiles*, and considered circumcision as an uneasy yoke; yet in the beginning of the very next chapter, we read that Paul, though he and Timothy had these very decrees to deliver, to be kept as they passed through the cities, even at such a juncture as this, he acted so greatly in condescension to the weakness of the Jews, that he circumcised Timothy, because of them; and after he had passed on, and they had delivered said decrees, on his return again to Jerusalem, all the elders, with James (who had pointedly decided against circumcision in regard to the *Gentiles*) told Paul that many thousands of the Jews believed; that they were zealous of circumcision and the law of Moses, and advised him to purify himself, *and be at charges*, &c. with four men that had a vow; that so those over zealous Jews might see he kept the law, and walked orderly, Acts xxi. 20—24. And yet in the next verse they say, “as touching the *Gentiles* which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing,” &c. So we read, 26, “then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment

of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." So very great was the condescension of the primitive Apostles and elders to the weak state of the people in those early times.—To the weak, Paul says he became weak, yea that he was made all things to all men, that he might save some, 1 Cor. ix. 22; and this he expressly declares he did for the gospel's sake, verse 23—Yea, further he says expressly, he caught them with guile, 2 Cor. xii. 16. This kind of condescending guile they doubtless thought necessary in those times of weakness and zeal for ordinances. Paul's knowledge of Christ was by revelation, and so he saw clearly beyond those outside things, and knew that neither they, nor water baptism, could possibly belong to the gospel. Hence, though on the same principle of condescension he baptized a few, he thanked God it was so very few; and declared he was not sent commissioned to do it, 1 Cor. i. 17. Had he not known it was not Christ's baptism, nor within the great commission, he would not have dared to affront his Lord, by thanking him that he had so almost totally neglected his great gospel ordinance.—Paul's commission to the Gentiles, Acts xxvi. 18, is expressly "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me." This is as full, and contains the very sum and essence of the general commission, Mat. xxviii. 19. &c. and Mark xvi. only that it seems confined to the Gentiles.

The general commission is, to teach all nations, baptizing them into the name, &c. and declares that he that believeth, and is so baptized, shall be saved.—Paul's commission was to open the eyes of the Gentiles and turn them from darkness to the light, and from the power of Satan to God. And if any can doubt whether this is the same baptizing ministry of the gospel, mentioned in the more general commission, let the concluding words of Paul's commission be duly weighed, "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me."—Here they were not only to receive forgiveness of sins, but the *same* inheritance with all the other sanctified, and that through the *same* faith; for thus believing, they were baptized through the powerful ministry of the Apostle, which was in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, &c. into the life, power, and virtue of the same eternal name: they were turned truly unto God; and thus truly believing, and being livingly and sanctifyingly baptized into the same holy name, and into the same heavenly inheritance, and therein abiding the promise that *they shall be saved*, was equally in force to them, as to others so believing and being so baptized: that if there is any essential difference in these two commissions, as to what was to be done by those sent forth in the execution of them, I have not yet discovered it, except in Paul's limitation to the Gentiles, and I have not the least doubt, but that Paul did, in the execution of this commission, as truly baptize into the name of the Father, Son, and Ho-

ly Ghost, as ever an Apostle of Christ did, under the general commission; yea, did administer the very same baptism therein enjoined, that is Christ's and not John's. I am full in the faith, that Paul well knew the general commission contained no precept for water baptism. He knew too well the nature and spirituality of Christ's kingdom, to suppose it did—and therefore doing what he did, at baptizing with water, in mere condescension, he might as well, when he saw the abuse made of it, thank God that he had done no more—as he might that he had circumcised no more; for as neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, simply, is any thing in *this* kingdom; so neither is baptism nor non-baptism in water, simply, any thing at all therein—but the new creature: and this is all in all in this spiritual kingdom.

Some may think I make very bold with gospel ordinances, as they call them; but although I feel tenderness towards many who think them such, I am at no loss in pronouncing them no real parts of the gospel. And if they had been, why did not the great Council at Jerusalem, when it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them to lay upon the Gentiles no greater burthen than the few things they then named, mention water baptism, and the bread and wine, as things necessary to be punctually observed? Paul was in that Council; and he knew water baptism was designed that Christ “might be made manifest to *Israel*”—and did not wish the Gentiles burthened with it, any more than with circumcision. He and others, as occasion might seem

to require, in becoming all things to all men, in those early times of weakness and misguided zeal for externals, might condescend to baptize either a Jew or a Gentile: but neither the one nor the other could any more be brought under this sign, as a gospel ordinance, than under the many signs and symbols of the Mosaic law. I could go through every instance recorded in Scripture, where it was used by the Apostles, and I think clearly evince, that in no one case it was used, as strictly pertaining to the kingdom of the Messiah, nor under or according to his great gospel commission: but so much of this kind has been done by others, as Dell, Barclay, Penn, Pike, Claridge, Forster, Phipps, Fothergill, &c. that I think it not necessary to be so particular; firmly believing, that when men lay aside all preconceived opinions, and look fully and fairly into the nature and design of the gospel, in the true light and life of it, they must unavoidably see all these "old things done away;" and perceive how earnest Paul in particular was, to prevent the believers from degenerating into an attachment to and reliance on things outward. Read the whole epistle to the Galatians; it abounds with his care on this account. And if we go to the bottom of things, we shall find the *same* need of pressing forward to the disuse of water baptism, as of other ceremonies. It is as mere a ceremony, as merely figurative, as was circumcision, or any of the divers washings; has no more in its nature or effects to support its continuance; and is no more perpetuated among the precepts and injunctions of Jesus.

CHAPTER V.

Remarks on several passages in "A plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism" (as the Author calls it.) He is or was a sensible writer; but striving to unite old *shadows* with the gospel, he, like all who attempt it, blunders. Christ takes the lambs in his bosom, and bears with much weakness. The vail is done away in Christ. He is the end of all things. His are not subject to ordinances, in things that perish with the using. If all waited God's sending, water baptism, &c. would cease, and preaching would all be in baptizing efficacy. The non-experience of this, a cause of doubt in many, whether gospel ministry is baptizing. Christ's ministers not always ready, but minister the Spirit to others, as it is given them. The words "into the name of the Father," &c. not a form to use in so low an act as that of water baptism. Hence never once so used by the Primitives; but doubtless would have been, had *water* been the baptism of the commission. Peter's commanding baptism at Cornelius', no more perpetuates it, than Paul's baptizing Crispus and Gaius, though not sent to do it; nor any more than the use of circumcision, purifying, anointing with oil, &c. perpetuate them. The *name* is the *virtue*, power, &c. Christ Lord of the Sabbath-day—and of all figurative institutions. Made under the law, to redeem those under it. Then John was under it, so his baptism ended. It was in some sort used under the law, long before John. Old rituals not to be incorporated into Christ's pure religion and worship. His talk with the woman of Samaria, and with John's disciples, import this. His fast is inward.

IT is remarkable how strongly the advocates for *dipping* or *plunging* insist, in their arguments against the Pædo-Baptists, or such as sprinkle infants, upon a *plain, full and express*

command. This I think they pretty generally maintain to be necessary. The Author of "A plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism," as he calls it, and who seems to be as sensible a writer as almost any I have read in defence of water baptism by immersion, maintains these propositions, page 4, Bost. edit.

"I. The receiving of baptism is not a duty of itself, or a duty apparent to us from the nature of things; but a duty made such to *Christians* by the positive institution of *Jesus Christ*.

"II. All *positive duties*, or duties made such by *institution* alone, depend *entirely* upon the will and *declaration* of the person who institutes or ordains them, with respect to the real *design* and *end* of them; and consequently to the due *manner* of performing them,

"III. It is plain, therefore, that the *nature*, the *design*, and the due manner of *receiving* baptism, must of necessity depend upon what *Jesus Christ*, who instituted it, hath declared about it."

On which I would remark, that if the *nature*, *end* and *design*, with the due *manner* of *administering* and *receiving* Christ's baptism, must depend *entirely* upon what he himself *hath declared* about it, I think it is plain, that the *nature* of it is altogether inward and spiritual. He never once calls outward baptism with water *his*; neyer once *declares* any such thing about his, as that elementary water or any other outward

thing belongs to it; but distinguishing *his own* from that of *water*, says plainly, "John truly baptized with *water*, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," Acts i. 5.

And as to the *manner* of its administration, he has not *declared* one word *about* its being by dipping in outward water. On the contrary, what he *does* expressly *declare* as to its *administration* by his Apostles, shows it to be *by* and *through* the efficacy of their powerful *gospel ministry*. They were to *teach, baptizing*: and that not *into water*; but "into the *name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And even this very author, in reciting this passage, this great commission, both affirms it to be "the first account of baptism as a Christian institution; and renders it, "*into the name,*" &c. p. 39. Now if, as he asserts, *this* is "the first account of baptism, as a Christian institution," and if *this* is so very *different* from that which was *in water*, that is *into the eternal name*, how could he *add water* to this institution, and yet repeatedly maintain the absolute necessity of a *plain* and express *declaration* from Christ himself, both as to the *nature, end* and *design*, and also the due *manner* of *performing* and *receiving* Christian baptism? This he urges again and again. See page 45. "It cannot be doubted Jesus Christ sufficiently declared to his first and immediate followers, the *whole* of what he designed should be understood by or *implied* in this duty; for this being a positive institution, depending entirely upon his will, and not designed to contain *any thing* in it but what *he himself*

should please to affix to it, it *must* follow, that he *declared* his mind about it *fully* and *plainly*; because, otherwise, he must be supposed to institute a duty of which no one could have any *notion* without his institution, and at the same time not to instruct his followers sufficiently what that duty was—to be.” If this is good reasoning against *sprinkling infants* why not as good against *dipping adults* in material water, since Christ never once mentions *either* as belonging to his baptism? And yet this sensible author will not allow *any thing* at all *in it*, or to be *understood*, or even *implied* in it, but what Christ *fully* and *plainly* declared his mind about: and then queries, “where has Jesus Christ *declared* his mind, and declared it *fully* and *plainly*, that infants are to receive Christian baptism?” Now, serious reader, let us just vary the terms of this question, and ask, “where has Jesus Christ *declared* his mind *fully* and *plainly*—nay, where has he declared it *at all*, that *adults* are to be baptized in water? or where has he ever declared *material water* to pertain to his baptism?” I believe the text where he has declared *this* is not in the Bible, any more than *the other*: and also that *dipping adults outwardly*, is no more the baptism Christ ordained, than *sprinkling infants*: and that the foregoing reasoning is as substantially conclusive in one case, as the other.

But he goes on, and asks, “is not our Saviour’s commission far from declaring *fully* and *plainly* in favour of children’s baptism, perfectly *silent* on this head?” And I ask, is it not as *perfectly silent* about *water*? But he further asks,

“does it say any more than this, make *disciples, converts, believers*, amongst all nations, and baptize them?” Here I answer, *yes*; it is not only *perfectly silent* as to *water*, as not at all intended therein; it expressly enjoins *into* what they are to be baptized, *the name of the Father, &c.* But had it said no more than *make disciples, baptizing them*, he who presumes to *add water*, adds that which Christ has no-where enjoined; but has emphatically *distinguished* from *his baptism*. And he who separates *baptizing* from *teaching*, in this commission, and represents the baptism here enjoined, as enjoined to be otherwise administered than by the baptizing ministry of the gospel, puts *asunder* what Christ here plainly *joined together*.

Page 41, 42, he says, “when therefore our blessed Saviour, after his resurrection, instituted *his* sacrament of baptism, if *infants* were to be received to it, it cannot be doubted that *he himself* sufficiently *declared* this to his first and immediate followers, which sufficient and *only authentic* declaration must appear in some passage of the New Testament. “There seems’ (says he) “the greatest reason to expect some *express declaration* on this head, because otherwise men who had hitherto been used *to exclude infants*, and to look upon them no way concerned in the ordinance of baptism, would be likely still to pass them by, and not think of them as coming within the reach of their fresh commission. Men who, *during John’s ministry*, had already baptized an infinite multitude of the *adult only* amongst the *Jews*, would naturally conclude, on their

being sent forth to practise the same rite among the *Gentiles*, that with them also the *adult only* were proper subjects, unless there appeared something upon the *face of their commission* to teach them otherwise." Now does not this hold altogether as forcibly against *immersion in water*? Let us read the argument thus: when our Saviour, after his resurrection, commissioned his disciples to administer his *one saving baptism*, if *outward water* belonged to it, it cannot be doubted that *he himself* sufficiently *declared* this to his first and immediate followers; which sufficient and *only authentic* declaration must appear in some passage of the New Testament. There seems the greatest reason to expect some *express declaration* on this head; because, otherwise, men who had hitherto been used to hear *water baptism* called John's, and pointedly *distinguished* from Christ's, and Christ's expressly declared to be *quite another thing*, the Holy Ghost and fire, in which it were very absurd to suppose material water to have any part, might be very likely still to *reject water*, as not at all within the meaning of a commission confined wholly to the *one saving baptism* and ministry of the gospel, which was to continue to the end of the world, and which could not be administered without the immediate presence and help of Christ in spirit; and therefore required their waiting at Jerusalem, till they were "endued with power from on high," before they could execute the commission.

Men who, during John's ministry, had baptized many of the *Jews* into his *watery baptism*,

and had considered it *only as his*, and as *preparing* the way for *Christ's*, might very naturally, on being sent to baptize the *Gentiles* with *Christ's baptism*, and, for qualification, promised his *divine presence*, or the endowment of "power from on high," conclude that *water baptism* was still *but John's*, and required no more power *from above* to administer it *now* than *before*; but that *Christ's*, being, as they had ever been taught, entirely a *different baptism*, required quite *different qualifications* to administer it; and *which*, accordingly, they were promised to *receive*, and directed to *wait for*, before they went forth, or indeed could possibly go forth, in this commission. All this, the very *nature* of *Christ's baptism*, the manner and terms of the commission, and the qualifications expressly pointed out therein, as necessary to its execution, might naturally lead them to conclude, unless there had also something appeared upon the *face of their commission to teach them otherwise*, and turn their minds from *Christ's* to *John's baptism*; which yet, in itself, were, in such a commission, unaccountably absurd. But prejudice has such a powerful influence, that many texts are read and quoted in support of elementary water, which speak only of the spiritual water of the word. I even admire at the misapplication of a considerable number, in this way, by the author now mentioned; and perhaps I may, before I have done, point some of them out; though I aim not at controversy, but the advancement of all, beyond signs and shadows, to the life and substance. And this I think will be the case with such as fully adhere to the best part of the

sentiments contained in their best writings; as for instance, the foregoing in the present author's account.

And again, p. 46, "a limited commission amounts to a *prohibition* of the things *not* therein contained." This he doubtless thought, and doubtless many of his readers still think, conclusive against *infant sprinkling*. I think it as much so against *outward immersion*. The commission is as much *limited* in one case as the other, and as much "amounts to a *prohibition*." Let then this sentiment be admitted in its *full* force and latitude, and it will lead to the *unshadowy* dispensation of gospel realities, to the *baptism that now saves us*. But instead of *this*, too many are acting as he says the *Romanist* does, about *infallibility*, p. 71. "Thus" (says he) "the *Romanist*, in an affair whose *nature* admits of none but *positive* evidence, endeavours to make up the want of it by *inference*, and reasoning from fitness. Such an institution there was under the *Old Testament*, therefore it remains under the *New*." And do not both Pædo and Antipædo-Baptists endeavour to make out *water* to be Christ's baptism, which is wholly wanting in the words of his commission, and wholly repugnant to the nature and design of his baptism, by inference? And is it not urged upon us by them, from what *was* under a former dispensation too, and that a *decreasing one*, and designed to terminate, and be fulfilled in Christ? whose gospel and baptism is the power of God unto salvation to true believers?—P. 61, he speaks of *sureties* for infants, as entirely a *supplement*. I say the same of *water*. It is entirely a *supplement*,

that men strive hard to *add* to the gospel.—But in the matter of an *instituted duty*, he maintains “no one can be a judge but the institutor himself of what he designed should be contained in it, and because, supposing him not to have spoken his mind *plainly* about it, it is impossible that any other person (to whom the *institutor* himself never revealed his design) should *make up that defect*: all that is *added*, therefore (says he) “to Christ’s institution as a necessary part of it, ought to be esteemed only as the *invention* of those who *add* it: and the more there is added (let it be done with never so much *solemnity*, and never so great pretences to *authority*) the less there is remaining of the *simplicity* of the *institution*, as *Christ himself* left it,” p. 61.

What pity it is, reader, that men who can argue so closely against human *inferences*, additions, supplements and *inventions*, do not so *feel* the force of their own arguments, as to leave all *additions*, and come home to the naked simplicity of Christ’s *institutions*, as *he himself* has left them to us.—But he goes on saying, “I am the more solicitous to observe this, and to *impress* it upon the minds of Christians, because it is the *only thing* that can either prevent or cure the *mistakes* of many sincere Christians upon this subject.”* He says, p. 54, “the people called

* And yet, after all his solicitude to observe and *impress* these sentiments, he has himself, throughout his performance, mistakenly kept up, and endeavoured to maintain, the *addition* and supplement of an *outward sign* (for he repeatedly calls it a sign himself) to the institution of an important and soul-saving ordinance of the gospel.—So hard is it “either to prevent or cure the mistakes of many sincere Christians upon this subject.”

Quakers are of opinion, that the baptism of the Spirit is the *alone Christian baptism*, and the baptism of water belonged only to the dispensation of *John*. But in the case of *Cornelius* we have an instance under the *Christian dispensation*, and upon the call of the Gentiles to the faith of the gospel, wherein it appears the Apostle *Peter* is so far from concluding the baptism of the Spirit renders that of water unnecessary, that he infers directly the contrary, viz. no man ought to be against their baptism in *water*, because they had, previously, received the *baptism of the Holy Ghost*. Then baptism with the *Holy Ghost* was the proof and reason of their right to the baptism of *water*.

This argument should be well examined; no doubt it weighs much with many, and seems to them unanswerable: but to me there is something in it which tends directly to the confirmation of the Quakers' doctrine, and the overthrow of his own. The Quaker says, "the baptism of the Spirit is the *alone Christian baptism*, and the baptism of water belonged only to the dispensation of *John*." But this author throughout his "plain account," insists on *immersion in water*, as the baptism of Christ. Now there is but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," belonging to the Christian dispensation—but here this author, *three times*, mentions expressly both the baptism of the Spirit, or *Holy Ghost*, and the baptism of *water*, as *distinct things*, as *two baptisms*, and urges them, being both used in the case of *Cornelius*, as proof that *water baptism* belongs to the gospel.—Will he say, Christ

instituted *two baptisms*? If not, as here where two are mentioned, it is plain *one only* of them was *Christ's*. If *Christ's* is but *one* and that one be that of the *Holy Ghost*, then that with water is not *Christ's*, but, as the Quaker says, was *John's*. On the other hand, if *Christ's* is but *one*, and that one be immersion in elementary *water*, then that of the *Holy Ghost* is not *Christ's*.—So that this instance, instead of proving *water baptism* to be *Christ's*, proves quite the contrary; and powerfully confirms the Quakers' doctrine, that it was *only John's*, and was continued through condescension to the weakness of many in that early state of things in the Christian church. And as it was administered to some before, and to others *after* they received *Christ's baptism* of the *Holy Ghost*, I think nothing can be gathered from this instance in support of the *right*, the *divine right*, as he elsewhere calls it, of outward *immersion* under the gospel, unless it be granted that such as received immersion *before* the baptism of the *Spirit*, had no *right* to it; the which to grant, is at once giving up several of the supposed strong holds in favour of water.

Indeed whoever attempts to prove *signs* and *shadows* parts of the *gospel*, will ever meet with insurmountable difficulties: hence we find many attendant on every attempt (however ingeniously executed) to dignify water baptism to the degree of an ordinance of Jesus—But when we once come to the genuine *simplicity* of the *gospel*, these difficulties vanish; and nothing seems more natural and easy, nothing more consonant to plain scripture, and the necessity of occa-

sions, than these frequent condescensions, in times of weakness, and therein those diverse continuations of things, in point of obligation; ceased which are recorded in the New Testament.—Indeed this very condescension is an eminent display both of the wisdom and compassionate goodness of our Saviour.—It exhibits him equal to all states and conditions, “touched with a feeling of our infirmities,” commiserating our weakness, *taking the lambs in his bosom*, and gently leading those that are with young;” feeding them with food they could bear, *milk* before *strong meat*; and indulging them with *signs*, till they could see the all sufficiency of the *substance*, to which all the signs pointed—“there is a time to every purpose;”—and, says Christ “if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” John iii. 12. He knew what *was in man*, knew all his attachments and weaknesses, and graciously stooped to the lowest, darkest and most *literal* state of sincere seekers; waiting patiently their gradual advancement to a state of pure spiritual worship, void of “all old things,” of every sign and symbol.—And I have a full persuasion and belief, that such is his condescending goodness and forbearance, in our days, towards great numbers of sincere-hearted disciples, who are still, even in reading the *New Testament*, so far *under the vail* as not to perceive the abolition of certain ceremonials, which never *did*, and in the nature of things never *could* belong to the gospel: and the travail and prayer of my soul is, that they may *not*, as too many certainly and sorrowfully *do*,

to their great hindrance in the true Christian progress, settle down, and stick in these things; but may pass forward into the mystery of Christ, till they experience the *vail* entirely *done away* in him.—The vail is done away in Christ.—This is the joyful experience of such as are livingly *in him* the *life*, the *substance*, the *Lord from heaven*, the quickening spirit, the *light of men*, and inward *hope of glory*: but a mere profession of Christ can never *do away the vail*.—"The covering is spread over the face of all nations"—and is as *thick*, and *dark*, over the minds of nominal Christians, yea, thousands who are high in profession of Christ, and zealous in exterior performances, as it is over any persons whatever, or ever was over the Jews in reading *Moses*.—And though the God of all grace is pleased to permit many upright-hearted men and women to remain so under the vail as still to *use* and plead for these exteriors; yea; some who are in a degree preachers of the gospel; yet, blessed be his holy name, he is not without, but he has raised up and preserved many living witnesses, from time to time, to the pure spirituality of his gospel kingdom, who are truly of the inward heart circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,"—Phil. iii. 3. These dare not *confide* in, *touch*, *taste*, *handle*, or become *subject to ordinances*, in these things, which *perish with the using*, Col. ii. 20, 21, 22.

Many such there are, even in our day, who can truly "thank God," that he has shewn them

clearly the emptiness and abrogation of all these things, and can truly declare, with Paul, touching water baptism, that "God sent them not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." And it is believed, that if the preachers of our day were all to wait till God sent them to baptize in water, or not to run without his commission and sending, we should soon see a total cessation of the practice, and no real loss to Christianity neither. Indeed, if they were all to wait his sending, before and until they commence preachers, there would doubtless be abundantly less of that *teaching* which is not *baptizing*. And is it not highly probable, that one great reason why many under *such* teaching, cannot believe the gospel ministry is truly according to the gospel commission, "teach, baptizing,"—in their non-experience of the power and efficacy of the pure living ministry of the gospel, which is always in the *power of God*, and is more or less to the salvation of them that believe? But where there is a living ministry in purity preserved, and where the living word, thus livingly preached, is mixed with true faith (which is ever of the operation of God) *in them that hear it*; these can set to their seal, that such do really "minister to them the Spirit." See Gal. iii. 5, "he therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit." Here "the excellency of the power is of God," even though we have this treasure in *earthen vessels*," 2 Cor. iv. 7.—Though it is *men*, that out of this good treasure of the heart bring forth excellent things, "minister the Spirit," *impart spiritual gifts*, and actually baptize into the life, and spirit, name and power, of the Father, &c.—yea, *beget* souls,

to God; as Paul says, "I have begotten you through the gospel," 1 Cor. iv. 15; yet the instruments have no *sufficiency of themselves*;—their "sufficiency is of God," who maketh them able ministers of the New Testament, "not of the *letter*, but of the *Spirit*," 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.—Hence Paul said, he would "know not the *speech* of them which are puffed up, but the *power*. For the kingdom of God is not in *word*, but in *power*," 1 Cor. iv. 12. 20. Were all to keep strictly to this life and *power* of the *kingdom*, these signs would cease forever; and we should have no other ministry, but the pure baptizing ministry of the gospel.—And here ariseth the necessity of *waiting upon the Lord*, for the renewal of *strength* and qualification for all gospel ministry; that so the *power* may indeed be of God; as the Apostles waited to be "endued with power from on high."—And those who so wait, and dare not run of themselves, or preach in their own time, or at one time, because they have at another, they follow the Great Shepherd, learn his experience, and are led in his footsteps:—their *hour is not always*;—it frequently is *not yet come*, as was the case with *him*: but great is their advantage, by this experience and *limitation*; for when it *does come*, it comes with *power*; and they know the life and meaning of Christ's words, John xx. 21, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And surely *he* was sent of the Father, to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and did do it, and that even in preaching the gospel to the meek. And as he was anointed for this service by the *Spirit of the Lord*, that was upon him, as

before noticed, in order that his ministers might be qualified for the *like* service, and be sent in *like manner* as he was; immediately "when he had said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost," v. 22; and thus qualified by the *same anointing*, and sent forth in the *same service*, they were enabled to *work the same works*, according to his promise, John xiv. 12 "verily, verily" (mark the certainty of it) "I say unto you, he that believeth on me the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."—But why because he went to the Father? Because he would then pray the Father, and the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, should be sent to abide with them forever, to lead and guide them into all truth, and qualify them to work the works of God.

Paul exhorts Timothy, "that good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us," 2 Tim. i. 14. And was not this good thing truly, as Paul calls it, "*the gift of God?*" and yet was it not *in* Timothy by the putting on of Paul's hands? 2 Tim. i. 6. Thus we see, as in other instances, "through laying on of the Apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given," Acts viii. 18, and why not as easily by their preaching? It is evident, that it was given by their preaching, which was in the divine power, as well as by the laying on of hands, in the *same* power, and that too in this very instance, the case of Timothy; for, says Paul to him, "neglect not the gift that is

in thee, which was *given by Prophecy*, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," 1 Tim. iv. 14.

Here Paul declares this *gift of God* was given by *prophecy*, as well as by laying on hands. And what is prophecy? It is *preaching* the gospel; for "he that prophesieth," (says Paul) "speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort," 1 Cor. xiv. 3. Great *edification* and *comfort* indeed attend such truly gospel *prophecy* and teaching, when thereby he that thus speaketh unto men, "ministreth unto them the Spirit," *the gift of God*, that is *thus given* to them, as a *good thing* indeed, and which, after they received it they cannot keep it, "but by the Holy Ghost that is in them."—It is the *Spirit* that first *quickeneth*; and as these quickenings are attended to, an *increasing with the increase of God* is happily experienced; even "Grace for" (the faithful improvement of) "*grace*." And after all improvements and communications of *grace*, or the *Holy Ghost*, it is still this alone that can enable us to *keep* this precious *treasure* which we have thus graciously received from God; being given to us, of him, in our *earthen vessels*. It is neither *speaking*, nor *laying on of hands*, in a formal manner, that can convey divine influence to the soul, or qualify for divine service. The *power* is *only* of God. And he that is not *immediately* impowered of God, has nothing more to do, either with preaching or laying on hands, than *Simon the Sorcerer*, who would have bought with money the privilege of communicating the Holy

Ghost, that he might trade with it, as I conclude, and make money by the business.

It is probable the *sign* of laying on of hands was, in that *weak* and *early* state of the church, or of many young converts, made use of as a *confirmation*; thereby strengthening their *faith* in the *truth* of the gospel, and in the *power* attending the *Apostles*; but it is neither needful where the gospel is generally established, nor, out of the life, any more availing than the *brazen serpent* was to Israel, after its *real use* was ceased, and they were become ensnared by an *idolatrous* attachment to it, and dependence on it. The minds of men, not *single* to divine light, are ever liable to mistake the real use and design of *such things*; to continue them out of all proper season, and rely *too much* upon them. Hence the continuation of water baptism, bread and wine, laying on of hands, &c. among Christians, even to this day; as of Israel's *lifeless* looking to that *mere piece of brass*, for several hundred years formerly, and long after its real use was over, and when no good was derived from their *formal looking to it*.

Ananias was sent to Paul expressly, Acts ix. 17, that he might "be filled with the Holy Ghost." Then surely he instrumentally *dispensed* or ministered it to him, or (which is the same thing) *baptized* him with it.

Some contend against *baptizing* spiritually by *teaching* in the *power* of the gospel, and urge that the gift of tongues always attended the

baptism of the Holy Ghost. If so, who have this baptism in our day? Will it be granted that none are *now* baptized with the baptism of *Christ*? Then the saints now receive none but *John's*. But there are divers instances in the New Testament of persons baptized with the Holy Ghost, where not a word is said of their speaking with tongues, as the attentive reader may see for himself.

Peter, in relating his visit to Cornelius, mentions the angel's saying to him, to wit, that he (Peter) should *tell him words* whereby *he* and his house should be *saved*. This shows his *words* would be with *baptizing* efficacy; that he *would* as he certainly *did*, baptize them with the Holy Ghost: he *taught baptizingly*, according to commission: and *he himself* evidently considers *that* baptism with the *Holy Ghost*, which they received through his *teaching*, as an exact accomplishment *both* of this saying of the angel, and of our Lord's promise in regard to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Do, kind reader, examine the passage for thyself, Acts xi. where the angel, speaking of *Peter*, says to Cornelius, verse 14, "who shall *tell thee words*, whereby thou and all thy house shall be *saved*." In the very next sentence, to shew how exactly this was verified, Peter says, verse 15, "and as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." Here he plainly connects their reception of the Holy Ghost, through his ministry, with the saying of the angel, that he should tell them *words*, by which they should be *saved*. Indeed, how could he possibly tell them words

by which they should be *saved*, unless baptizing influence attended his *words*? Nothing ever *saves the soul*, without the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Had I heard the angel tell Cornelius, that Peter would tell him *words* by which he should be *saved*, I think it would to me have been sufficient evidence that Peter's *words* should be with *baptizing power*. And this I think might be depended on; seeing nothing *saves* short of "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." And on this ground we might take it for certain, from this saying of the angel, that Peter's powerful teaching was to prove *baptizing* to Cornelius and his household, whether Christ had ever verbally commissioned *him* and the other Apostles to *teach baptizingly* or not; and whether Peter had ever related that he *did* so or *not*. But seeing Christ did so commissionate them, and seeing the angel did declare, that Peter should deliver *words* by which men should be *saved*; and seeing none can be saved without the *one* only saving and spiritual baptism; and seeing they received *this*, as Peter began to *speak*, the Holy Ghost then falling on them; and seeing Peter himself evidently considered its so falling on them as the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and immediately, in the very next words, applied our Lord's promise to what then took place, through his ministry, saying, verse 16, "then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with *water*; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost:" I think all these facts and considerations, taken together, amount to a very full and strong confirmation, that the ministry of

the gospel is a baptizing ministry, and that *men* did instrumentally baptize with the Holy Ghost. And this will assuredly be the case, as long as Christ continues to be *with* his ministers, and they thereby continue to preach the gospel, as it was preached in the primitive times, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." And this (it is the unshaken faith of some) will be the case "even unto the end of the world. Amen."

This account of Peter's, respecting the baptism of Cornelius and his family with the Holy Ghost, through his ministry, is so connected and expressed by him, as to confirm his meaning, where, afterwards, he speaks of the *baptism which now saves us*, to be, that this *saving* baptism is the same by which Cornelius and his house were baptized, while he was delivering those *words*, by which the angel had said they should be *saved*. Peter knew no *figure* could *save*, any more than the "blood of bulls and of goats" could "take away sins;" and therefore in telling what is the baptism which *saves* (which is several times already remarked) he also carefully shews us what it *is not*, lest his mention of the word *water* should draw such as were too outward in their views to trust in or continue the use of that which only *puts away* the outward *filth of the flesh*, or of the *body*. And his commanding Cornelius and his house to be baptized, no more proves he had a *commission* to baptize with *water*, than Paul's baptizing Crispus and Gaius proves *he* had a commission for it, which he declared he *had not*; nor yet a whit more than his circumcising Timothy, and *purifying*

in the temple, and James' directing the sick to be *anointed with oil* in the name of the Lord, proves a *divine commission* for all these things. Had Paul given a circumstantial relation of his baptizing the *few* he did baptize in water, without mentioning that he was not *sent* to do it, or *thanking God* that he did it in so *few instances*, it had been as strong in favour of the practice, as any instances of its administration by the rest of the Apostles. *This* he might have done, as well as others, though he was not sent to administer that baptism, and do not all see it would in reality have been no *true* support of the practice? Yet how eagerly would it have been claimed, as a support thereof, just as are the instances where *others* used it.

Now let us suppose they had *all* testified (and I can see no reason why they might not, as *truly* as Paul) that Christ sent them not so to baptize; that they did it in condescension, and thanked God that they did it *no more*; what *then* would become of all those instances, *now* so confidently urged as a proof that a mere *figurative* immersion is the saving baptism of Jesus? They did divers things *without* commission, and yet do not expressly declare they were *not sent* to do them. Does their omission of such a declaration infer they *had* a commission? By no means. Neither does their not declaring they were *not sent* to administer elementary baptism, infer they had a commission for *that*. But, say many, Christ *gave* them a commission to baptize. Very true; and the minds of men looking outward for the meaning and accomplishment of many

things that are inward and spiritual, has induced them mistakenly, among other instances, to understand a commission expressly to baptize *into* the eternal *name*, as meaning *into water*; and thus to retain, as a gospel ordinance, a mere *figurative, preparatory, decreasing* and terminating institution. Some think it must have been by divine commission that the Apostles baptized in water, because it was in the *name of the Lord*. But we see the *anointing of the sick with oil*, was also in the *name of the Lord*. And yet I know of none who *now* hold to a divine commission for this *practice*. But we may take notice, that neither *this*, nor *water baptism*, was “*into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” No, there is not one instance of this form of words in all the Bible, in the use of *water*, which surely we may conclude would have been the case, had the commission designed an outward dipping; for, in that case, that must have been the *ordained* form of words; but as *water* was not meant, the commission contains no form of words at all to be used in baptism; but the words *into the name*, &c. express the very *nature, power* and divine efficacy of the baptism they were to administer. It was not their *own*, it was not *John’s*, it was not *water*, it was not any thing that they could administer at any other time, than when specially “*endued with power from on high*;” and therefore *this* they were to *wait for*, and were promised to receive, as their qualification, from him who has *all power*.

Now he who had all power, was “*Lord even*

of the Sabbath day," Mat. xii. 8, and just as much Lord of every other sign, and has equally fulfilled them all, and redeemed his people from every yoke of mere ceremonial observations;—for he was made of a woman, "made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law," Gal. iv. 4.—And if *Christ* was made under the law, surely John was also under it, as I have before advanced; nor was it ever totally abolished, even as a law of carnal or outward ordinances, till Christ rose from the dead.—And this holds good *inwardly* with the true Christian traveller in his own experience—"he that hath an ear, let him hear."

But as John was under the law (though advanced near to the kingdom) Christ has, in redeeming his people from all ceremonials of the law, also redeemed them from water baptism, which indeed was frequently in some sort practised under the law, long before John; as appears by the very precepts of the law—and which is allowed by the author of the "plain account" before mentioned; for speaking of baptism in the days of the Apostles, he says, "the principal scene of baptism lay in a country where immersion was quite *familiar*, and *must*, by the very laws of their religion, come into *daily* use through all parts of the land," p. 29. Baptism in water being therefore a ceremonial of the law, was, though differently used by John, completely ended, with every other ceremony thereof, when Jesus rose triumphant from the grave, led captivity captive, and gave spiritual gifts unto men. And when he rises so *in us*, and

completely puts all things under him, in our souls, we shall all find there are no signs or symbols in the gospel, as standing ordinances thereof.—John's using water baptism a little differently from what had been usual before, made no difference as to its perpetuity, though that difference might have taught the Jews, had their ears been open enough to have heard it aright, that he who was coming after him would make great alterations, and remove those things that could be shaken, that those only which could *not* be shaken might *remain*.—There is abundant evidence in scripture, that Christ never intended to incorporate any of the old rituals into his pure religion and worship.—Thus he taught the woman of Samaria, at the well, that the true worship was inward, “in spirit and in truth,”—and turned her mind from *outward water* to the *inward*, John iv. And when John's disciples came to him, “saying, why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?” Mat. ix. 14, he first shows the time of *mourning* is not while the bridegroom's comforting presence is enjoyed; but that, when he was taken from them, then they would *fast*: which shows the *fast* he meant was *inward*.—And, in the next place, to show the impropriety of uniting the ceremonies of the *law*, as outward *fasts*, washings, &c. with the *gospel*, the *life*, the *substance*—he tells them, “no man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment,” &c. “neither do men put new wine into old bottles,” &c. plainly inculcating, that his gospel was the *new and living way*—his *new cloth*, the robe of pure righteousness—the garment of salvation; his *new wine*.

the wine he drinks *new* with his chosen, in his *Father's inward and spiritual kingdom*—and therefore is put only into the *new bottles*, the hearts of the sanctified; that so their hearts might be *animated*, and rejoice in his salvation, out of all formality and ritual observances; for that he was not come, with his *new wine*, to supply the *old bottles* of law ceremonies, or *animate* therewith the vanishing dispensation of types and shadows,—nor with his *new cloth*, to patch up the old garment of those “carnal ordinances,” imposed on them until the time of reformation, Heb. ix. 10, which was only “a figure for the time then present,” v. 9. Nay, verily, this was not his intention;—not the design of the Father in sending him—he came to *abolish* all these, and so to bring in everlasting righteousness; and which, wherever it is completely brought in, entirely supercedes the necessity of all these outward ordinances, and abolishes them forever.

It is further observable, that Christ's directions about *fasting*, point plainly to that which is inward, and wherein those who fast according to them “appear not unto men to *fast*,” Mat. vi. 18. Indeed, it being his peculiar office to *fulfil* and abolish the ceremonial observances, I believe we shall find, by a careful and illuminated perusal of all his parables and discourses, that he never on any occasion expressed any thing for the perpetuation of outward signs, but on the contrary, very repeatedly, and on almost every occasion that furnished proper opportunity, pointed out, though often times very obscurely, at least to this world's wisdom, the unceremo-

nious and purely spiritual *nature* of his kingdom. But these are things which "the vulture's eye" (though very prying) "hath not seen." Job xxviii. 7. They are only "spiritually discerned." The natural man (with all his talk of Christ and gospel ordinances) cannot know them. See 1 Cor. ii. 14.

CHAPTER VI.

All baptized with Christ's baptism are members of his church, and none else. Six queries ; which, rightly answered, will determine which is Christ's baptism.—Divers other queries. Paul's care to avoid running in vain ; hence he omits open proclamation against circumcision, at Jerusalem, though he had preached against it among Gentiles. Not strange, then, John's baptism was still in vogue. The TWELVE baptized only by John, in water. They could administer John's without the power they were to wait for to administer Christ's. Putting on Christ in baptism is putting on the armour of light. The word for *teach* in the commission, not the common word *didasko*, but *matheuo*, to disciple, instruct *into* the kingdom of heaven. Sprinklers and dippers both greatly err about Israel's baptism in the cloud and sea. It supports neither. "Plain account" corrected in this respect. The author of it allows the disciples, the use of water baptism, during Christ's ministry on earth, was the same as John's. It is the soul needs purgation. Water cannot do it. Divers texts showing plainly the *name* is often used for the life, presence, and power of the Lord.

THERE is a baptism by which every member is initiated into the body of Christ. As sure as any are thus baptized, they are members of Christ.—If any are not thus baptized, they are not of Christ's church.

Now, Query 1. What is the baptism, without which none can be members of Christ's church—and which none can be baptized with, but they immediately become members?

Query 2. Are all sure to be members of Christ's true church, who are baptized in water?

Query 3. Has Christ two baptisms? See Eph. iv. 5, "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." No more two gospel baptisms than two Lords, and two faiths.

Query 4. Does not Paul plainly say, "by one spirit we are all baptized into one body—and have been all made to drink into one spirit?" 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Query 5. Can any other but this, which baptizeth *into* the one body of Christ, be the one initiatory and saving baptism of Christ?

Query 6. Can that be the one baptism of Christ, which thousands may be baptized with, and yet not become members of his true church, but remain in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity?

I think these six queries, rightly answered, will determine which is the one initiatory and saving baptism of Christ in the gospel. Is it not strange that men don't see it?—Why do they stick in the practices of the Apostles so rigidly, in regard to John's baptism and the supper, and so easily get over divers other of their practices? Would it not have been a strange and almost unheard of thing, had those famous institutions dropt into disuse all of a sudden?—Could it possibly have been borne?—Do we not always find it much easier to bring people by degrees to re-

ject old venerated laws and customs, and adopt new ones, than to rush on and enforce them all at once?—Is not God a God of condescension and tenderness? Did he not anciently lead his people Israel, after he brought them out of Egypt, purposely a different way from the nearest, lest they should meet with discouragements, and return back to Egypt? Exod. xiii. 17.—Would he not at least allow his Apostles to exercise condescension, and go in and out before the primitive believers, as they could bear it?—Was not this evidently the case on divers other occasions?—Did not Paul, in communicating to the brethren at Jerusalem how it was that he preached the gospel among the Gentiles, to wit, void of ceremonies, and without circumcision, do it *privately*, to such only as were grown in the truth, and able to see the propriety of it, and to understand that the gospel has no such outward observations? Gal. ii. 2.—Does he not say, that this his care to avoid a general communication to all was, “lest he should run, or had run in vain?” Might it not have been wholly in vain for Paul to attempt benefiting the believers that were of the circumcision at Jerusalem, if he had bluntly at first declared off hand, that circumcision was abolished? And was not this about the year of our Lord fifty-two, and about the seventeenth year of Paul’s apostleship?

Is it strange, then, that he had to circumcise Timothy, purify in the temple, &c. on account of the wrong zeal and attachments of the Jews, seeing so late in the day circumcision so far maintained its ground, that he had probably run in

vain, if he had not avoided an open declaration of its being no gospel ordinance?—And is it any stranger, that *John's baptism* should be in too high estimation to be easily laid aside at once? Is water baptism once called Christ's in all the Bible? Is it once called a gospel ordinance? Did Christ ever practise it? Was John's baptism Christ's? If not, were Christ's twelve disciples ever baptized with Christ's baptism, or not? If Christ's is *water*, and yet not the same of John's, who baptized these Apostles, seeing Jesus baptized none in water? And we never read of the Apostles being baptized therein by any but John. I have often mentioned, that the design of water baptism was, that Christ and his baptism might be made manifest to Israel: and as this was fully done to the Apostles, as to his outward coming, they *needed no more* water baptism; and it seems pretty evident they *had* no more than was administered to them by John.—But if the commission, Mat. xxviii. 19, was water, and different from John's, why were *they* not baptized with it themselves, before they went forth to baptize others? Is it not plain, that that commission, as then verbally delivered, did not qualify them with *power* to administer the baptism mentioned in it? Were they not to wait for “power from on high?” Were they ever able to administer that baptism, till they were first baptized with the Holy Ghost themselves?—Is not this a confirmation that, as they had first received and then oft administered John's baptism before, without this more powerful endowment and qualification, but could not administer Christ's without it, that Christ's was quite a different

thing from John's, and out of their reach or ability to communicate, but as it was poured upon them from on high, and flowed through them upon others? "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments: as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore," Psalm cxxxiii. Is there nothing in the descending of this precious ointment, even down to the very skirts of the garment, in likeness of the living unity of the brethren, like the dew on Mount Hermon, and like the Lord's blessing on Mount Zion, that may give us some idea of the *communication of the Holy Ghost*, through the baptized Apostles, to and upon the souls of the people?—And is not this the one plain reason why they could not administer Christ's baptism till livingly baptized themselves, as the oil could not descend to the skirts till it was poured upon the head of Aaron? And let it be once for all seriously considered—ought we not to hold it as a certainty, that if the baptism in the commission had been water, the Apostles would have been first baptized with it themselves? Or can we suppose their having been baptized with John's baptism, by John, before they became Christ's disciples, sufficient to authorize them to administer Christ's? But even though this were granted, will any say the Apostles never received Christian baptism themselves? If Christ's is water, and yet not John's,

how could it possibly be dispensed with, in the case of the Apostles—in the case of Apollos, and the many which Paul *taught*, and *begat* unto God, but did not baptize in water?—We read of none *sent* expressly to baptize in water, but *John*. If, then *Christ's* baptism had been *with water*, and yet not the same with *John's*, ought not *Christ himself* to have baptized his disciples *with it*, before he sent *them* to baptize *others*, seeing we have no account of any other *but himself*, that had any authority to administer *his* baptism, till first baptized *with it* by him?—Who among the sons of men had a *right* to administer *his* baptism, before they were baptized with it *themselves*? If *none* had a right so to do, then if his was *with water*, and yet different from *John's*, is it not *certain* that his Apostles never received it, seeing “Jesus himself baptized not” with water, and none else had any right to administer *his* baptism, till *themselves* were baptized with it?—Does it not, therefore, plainly appear, that there is *no other* baptism with outward *water* but *John's*? And did not Jesus himself *wholly* avoid baptizing *any* in water, *on purpose* that it might plainly appear that there is *another*? Or if there is any other with *water* but *John's*, when, where, and by whom did it *begin*?—Who first dared to administer it? Would it now be thought lawful among the Baptists for any to administer the baptism of water, who had *not* received it? And would it *not* have been very arrogating for any one in *that day* to have intruded himself into the office of an administrator of *Christ's baptism*, who had never himself received it? Or, had any *so done*, how would *that* convey a right to those

by *such an one* baptized, to baptize others? I think we have all the reason we have a right to desire to conclude, if Christ had ordained water baptism, he would have administered it to those he had sent to administer it to others. And I rest firmly persuaded he never did ordain it, but that *all* the water baptism *now* practised among Christians is derived from *John*, or else is altogether, unauthorized in the New Testament. And why do those who now use it, use a form of words never once used by any of the Apostles? If they say Christ commanded it, then why did not his Apostles obey his command? Is not this another strong evidence that they were not commanded any *form of words at all*, nor any use of water, but that the words, *into the name*, &c. as plainly shew into *what* they were to baptize, as water would have been plainly shown, had the commission been expressly to baptize *into water*?

It is urged by some, that *putting on Christ*, which *all* do who are *baptized into him*, Gal. iii. 27, is giving up their *names* to Christ in *water baptism*: but of those *baptized into Christ*, in the Apostle's sense, he here declares, "ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs* according to the promise," 28, 29; that is *real* heirs of God, and *joint* heirs with Christ. This *certainly* is not true of *as many* as are baptized *into water*, though it certainly *is* true of *as many* as are baptized *into Christ*. Putting on Christ is therefore plainly thus, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. xiii. 14;

that is, "cast of the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light," v. 12. This is directly baptism *into the name*, for "God is light," and *Christ is light*; and *putting on the whole armour of light*, is truly putting on Christ in baptism. And it is very strikingly observable, that divers texts speak expressly of *baptism into Christ*; thus preserving the very intent and tenor of the commission; for as all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth *in him*, and as these texts express baptism positively as being *into him*, and verbally *in his name*, as was the case constantly when water was used, it is as evident as any thing can well be, that this *baptism into him* is really putting on him, the *life*, the *substance*, the *whole armour of light*—and that this answers the commission exactly, being *into the name*, the *life*, the power, the eternal *virtue itself*; and not into *water*, or any thing else, merely and verbally *in the name*.—I think this meaning of the words, *into the name*, &c. is much confirmed by a passage in the forementioned "plain account." The author pleads wholly for *immersion of adults in water*; and to maintain it against sprinkling of infants he says, p. 43, 44, "the word in Matthew, rendered *teach* is not the word commonly rendered *teach* in the New Testament. The word commonly used is DIDASKO, which occurs very often; but the other word, MATHETEUO, *teach*, in the baptismal commission of Matthew, is used only *three* times more in all the New Testament. Mat. xiii. 52, every scribe WHICH IS INSTRUCTED *into the kingdom of heaven*. Mat. xxvii 57, Joseph, who also himself was JESUS' DISCIPLE. Acts

xiv. 21, when they had preached the gospel to that city, and HAD TAUGHT *many*. They did not (says he) barely *preach the gospel*, but taught so effectually, as to *prevail* on many to become *disciples* or *believers*. This is the plain import of the *original*."

Does not this make strongly in favour of the Quakers' doctrine? Does it not shew the *teaching*, mentioned in this great commission, was to be with *divine power*, and to prevail effectually to discipleship?—Was not this the reason they were commanded to wait to be endued with power from on high, because they were *now* far otherwise to *baptize* people than they had done before? They were now to *disciple* them; that is, *teach* them so livingly and effectually, as truly to *baptize them into the name*, &c. Why else was this word MATHETEUO used *here*, to express this peculiar kind of powerful *discipling*, or baptismal teaching? a word used but *three times more*, as this author himself says, in all the New Testament.—He further says, in the same page, that this word "implies *teaching* full as much as the more common word, DLDASKO. The difference is, that the former has a more *precise* and *determinate* meaning, conveying to the Apostles this idea, viz, *so teach* the people as to persuade them to become *my disciples*."

Now, serious reader, seeing this passage does mean *teaching*, but at the same time is so very *precise* and *determinate* in its meaning, as to convey a clear idea of the great difference from

the simple common meaning of the word teach, plainly signifying to *make disciples by teaching*, that is, to *teach* or *disciple* all nations, *baptizing them*: let us see how the *three* other passages, where it is used, will concur with the doctrine of baptism *into the name*, &c. The first is Mat. xiii. 52, “every scribe which is instructed *into* the kingdom of heaven.”—This is the same word that is rendered *teach* in the commission: and here the scribe is *instructed*, *taught* or *discipled* into the kingdom of heaven.”—I think this is the very baptism enjoined in that commission: it is *into* the very life and substance intended by the *name*, to wit, the life, strength and virtue of the *kingdom*; the strong tower of safety, which the *name* of the Lord ever is to the righteous, the well instructed or truly disciplined scribe. And we see this scribe is initiated *into* the kingdom by *teaching*, and that the very *teaching*, *discipling* or *instructing*, which is enjoined in the commission, and which therefore required power from on high to perform, because it was a very different and much more effectual teaching (as this author maintains) than that expressed by the common word DIDASKO, *teach*. The second passage is Mat. xxvii. 57, “Joseph who also himself was Jesus’ disciple.” It seems plainly this; he had been *taught*, *instructed*, *discipled*, in this more powerful way of *teaching* than that meant by the other word *didasko*; that is, he was a scribe well instructed into the kingdom of heaven—or baptized into the eternal holy *name*, which is the same thing; for none can be a disciple of Christ without his saving *baptism*.

The third passage is Acts xiv. 21, "when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many"—that is, according to this author's own words, taught so *effectually* as to prevail on many to become *disciples*." "This" (he adds) "is the plain import of the original." Then, it seems, they *taught* them just according to the commission; and by which *teaching* they must have been *baptized into the name*; or (which is the same thing) instructed or discipled *into the kingdom*.—But this sensible author adds further, "the common appellation of *Christian believers* occurring in very numerous passages of the New Testament, is MATHETAI, *disciples*." "As this" (says he) is the usual *name* of *believers* in *Christ*, we have the *verb* of it in our Lord's commission, where he bids his followers to go and *make converts to him* throughout the world;" and p. 45, he quotes "Whitby's note on Mat. xxviii. 19," that is on the very commission itself—saying, "I desire any one to tell me how the Apostles could *matheteuin*, *make a disciple* of an heathen, or unbelieving Jew, without being *mathetai*, or teachers of them."—By all which it is clear, that both the learned Whitby, and this learned author, were sensible that this extraordinary kind of teaching was making disciples of Christ, *believers* in and real living converts to him: and it is certain none are such without baptism *into him*—his disciples, all true believers, all his sincere *converts*, throughout the world, are baptized by the *one* spirit into one body; they *drink all into one spirit*, and are thus *initiated*, as well *instructed scribes*, into the kingdom of heaven.—Is it not marvellous that this writer was

not, by the time he had seen and written thus much, so far instructed *into* it himself, as to have seen with equal clearness, that no part of all this had any thing to do with *elementary water*?—He maintains that the word *baptizo* always means *immersion* or *bathing all over in water*; and rejects the sprinklers' notions respecting 1 Cor. x. 2, "and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." The sprinklers' ideas on this passage he represents thus, p. 28, "the cloud which hung over the children of Israel is a watery substance, *sprinkling* its water in *drops*. The sea, which was as a wall *unto them on the right hand and on the left*, by force of the strong wind which blew, sent forth a great spray or sprinkling. So they were plentifully *sprinkled* by the cloud above, and by the waters on each side." This he cannot agree to. Let us see how he understands it, and whether he mends the matter. He thinks "a man of plain sense, not thinking of this cloud or pillar of *fire*, dropping down *water*, but of opinion—that the baptism of scripture is *immersion*, would be apt to carry his thoughts no further than to apprehend here is an allusion to the custom of *immerion*; the Israelites being, as it were, covered with the cloud over, and the waters on each side of them." Thus they stumble on every hand, who are vainly contending for the *figures*. His remark is very just, that a man of plain sense would not think of drops of *water* from a pillar of *fire*: and methinks it requires a little more than plain sense to understand immersion all over in water from this passage; but though a man "of opinion

that the baptism of scripture is immersion," might be very likely to stop short of the *substance*, and apprehend nothing further than an "allusion to the custom of immersion;" yet I do not see why a *man of real plain sense* may not query how a *pillar of fire* can represent *immersion in water*? Or how going through the sea on dry land, as a firm foundation, points out bathing all over in that fluctuating, unstable element? The Apostle in this passage expressly declares, they eat the same spiritual meat, and that they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. Hence it appears, they ate and drank the very *substance* which the saints in *all ages live by*. This indeed they must have *aten*, or else have had no *divine life in them*. Eating the *outward* emblems of it never gave divine life to the soul any more than outward baptism. Their eating the *outward manna*, and drinking outward *water* from the *rock*, could never make their souls alive to God, and was but *typical* of that "spiritual meat" which they also and as truly *ate*, as they did the outward; and of "that spiritual rock whereof they drank; for that rock *was* Christ." And why may not plain sense look a little *further* than to an "allusion to the custom of immersion" for the *substance* of their *baptism*, as well as for the *substance* of their *eating* and *drinking*? For seeing they did truly feed in greater or less degree *on Christ in spirit*, as well as of outward manna, &c. and so enjoyed something on the very *life* and *substance* of the Lord's *supper*; why may we not believe they were in degree substantially baptized into the *fellowship of his sufferings*, and

conformity to his *death*, as well as into those deep *outward* trials and afflictions, so pressingly experienced by them, whilst conducted by the *pillar of fire*, and whilst pursued by their enemies *at* and into the *midst* of the red sea? And thus the word *baptize* may answer as well to plunging into *fiery trials*, as into *water*.

Our Saviour says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished," Luke xii. 50. And can it be doubted that those who really fed on Christ in spirit, in that day, were in degree truly baptized with him into sufferings, and in some degree at least *buried* with him into *death*? In this way I think we may see something *further* in their baptism than outward *immersion*, and thus rescue the pillar of *fire* from either *dropping down water*, or importing immersion *into it*; and indeed there seems little or no sense in the passage understood as speaking of *either*: for suppose we understand with the *plain account* "an allusion to the custom of immersion," it then amounts to this—immersion in water is a figure of *purification*—and Israel's passage through the sea is a *figure* of that *figure*; or that the Apostle, in his assertion here, that they *were baptized*, only had an allusion to that *figure*. Now, if it was nothing but a *figure* of a *figure*, I see not how he could positively in truth say, *they were baptized*.—Either they *were*, or were not—if they were properly baptized, it was *inward* or *outward*: if it was *outward*, and a proper water baptism, then either dipping, sprinkling, or any thing that has a little resemblance and will bear an "allusion to the custom of immersion," may, for aught I

can perceive, be called *baptism*. Why then contend so long and loud about the *precise mode of it*? If Paul meant as he said, that *they were* baptized, I think he must mean *spiritually*: but if any will have it mean *outward water baptism*, do they not at once introduce a *third kind*, or a *third mode* of it, different from either *immersion* or *sprinkling*? At any rate, and turn it every way, will not the result be, either that Paul did not mean as he said, that *they really were baptized*, but only that their passage resembled baptism, and may bear an allusion to it, or that he meant an outward baptism, without either *dipping* or *sprinkling*, or that he meant an inward and spiritual baptism? The two first meanings I should suppose most if not all would, on due consideration, reject—the *last* I am confirmed is, as before evinced, the genuine meaning of the Apostle. He is *here* pressing it upon the *once* livingly baptized among the Corinthians, to hold out to the *end*. A few verses before (see the preceding chapter, 1 Cor. ix. 24) he says, “so run that ye may obtain,” 25th, “every man that striveth for the mastery is *temperate* in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. 26th, I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; 27, but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a *cast-away*.” Here he urges his own *subjection*, and the *temperance* of others, as examples; and then, to enforce the caution, impresses the danger of their falling short, and if possible prevent their becoming cast-aways, he pertinently reminds them how it fared

with some of the ancient fathers who came out of Egypt with Moses; and who, though they had partaken of the true spiritual *baptism*, *meat* and *drink* of the saints, yet afterwards (such is the weakness and danger of man) they *lusted after evil things*—*murmured*—*tempted God*—*committed idolatry* and *fornication*—and so were *overthrown in the wilderness*.—And in full confirmation that his aim in all this was to warn the Corinthians he declares, “these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted,” not tempt Christ, nor murmur, &c. as they did; and strikingly adds, “wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,” v. 12. Perhaps all will agree, that those thus warned by Paul had received *Christian baptism*, whether it be agreed or not what that was; and if Christians were in all that great danger of falling, after the example of unbelief and apostacy here exhibited by him, and if this example was pertinent to their state and danger, does not that pertinency consist much in the Israelites having known a good degree of that which is saving, and turning from it? Nehemiah testifies, that the *Lord saw their affliction in Egypt*, and *heard their cry by the red sea*, and gave also his good Spirit to instruct them, Neh. ix. 9, 20. God was so near and attentive to them, that he not only led them *by*; he even went himself before them *in* the pillar of cloud and of fire.

Let none therefore marvel that Paul says they were *baptized in the cloud*, seeing that holy presence was actually there, into which all the

spiritual Israel are baptized.—Moses tells them, Deut. v. 4, “the Lord talked with you face to face”—and Isaiah calls them the *ransomed*, testifying, li. 10, that the Lord “made the depth of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over.”—But in regard to their passage through the sea, it is evident the cloud was not *then over them, but behind them*.—It *had* gone before them; but just before their going through, we read, “the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went *behind them*; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood *behind them*,” Exod. xiv. 19. So that unless immersion all over *into* and *under* water, or at least an *allusion* to it, can be gathered from their going through the sea as on *dry ground*, with a cloudy and fiery pillar *behind them*, I cannot see any thing more in it for *immersion*, than for *sprinkling*; and in fact it appears to have nothing to do with *either*.

This author says, p. 41, “the disciples of Christ, during his ministry on earth, as well as the disciples of John, were very well acquainted with the institution of baptism;” and agrees with Whitby, that “they only baptized, as *John had done*, into the faith of the Messiah which was to come, and with *that baptism* of repentance, which prepared the *Jews* for the *reception* of his kingdom.” By this it is conceded, that during Christ’s ministry on earth, that baptism which his disciples used was the same as John’s. No wonder then Christ never used it himself; and as he never once used it either before or after his resurrection, as we don’t find his twelve Apostles

were ever baptized in water, but only into *John's baptism*, as before noticed, it seems clear to me, that Christ's commission does not contain water baptism.—His injunction to teach the people all things that he had commanded them, includes no such observation; for he had not commanded it, nor does it appear that the disciples ever used it, after Christ gave them this commission, in any wise as a different ordinance from what it had been before. If it was John's, and used by them as his before, it was afterwards but a continuation of the same ordinance. It no where in all the Bible appears to be an ordinance of Christ; but having been in great veneration, was indulgently continued through weakness, even after the resurrection.

Nothing can be gospel baptism, that is not saving: it is the *soul* that needs purgation; the baptism which effects *this*, cannot be that which is merely with elementary water; but must be that which burns up the filth, and removes the defilement; that is, the baptism *into the name, the life, the cleansing* virtue of the divine nature. Christ's baptism is ever described as *saving*, and none were ever saved without it. We all know that baptism *into water* may be received by such as are not in any degree *saved*; and I think, if we exercise but the common reason of mankind, we must see, that if water baptism were saving, it were a constant *miracle*, and that as oft repeated as it proved saving, even as truly a miracle as the turning water into wine; for there is nothing in a bare washing in outward water, that has any more effect towards an inward cleansing,

than there is in anointing with *oil*, or shaving off the *hair*. If therefore it were the baptism of Christ, it must either be a standing miraculous purification of souls by outward application, or a thing not saving; but the baptism of Christ is that which *now saves us*, and is in its own nature and operation as truly and constantly saving to the soul, as washing in water is cleansing to the body. In proportion to the degree in which the body is washed in water, it is cleansed by the outward putting away the filth of the flesh; and in proportion to the degree in which any soul experienceth the baptism of Christ, it infallibly produceth inward sanctification, by putting away the filth of the *spirit*. That *name* into which all the saints are baptized is *such*, that their baptism *into it* must purify. Purification is the very thing itself, and that is the one plain reason why it not only *is*, but *must be*, a baptism *into the holy name*: "for there is none other *name* under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12. It is truly by the name, that we are *saved*; for this divine and living "name is as ointment poured forth," Cant. i. 3. This is the "unction from the holy one," 1 John ii. 20. "The *name* of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe," Prov. xviii. 10. Well may they be *safe* in this *name*, seeing the baptism *into it* is ever saving.

Deeply sensible that there was no other salvation, the Psalmist prays, liv. 1, "save me, O God, by thy *name*;" and Jeremiah says, x. 6, "thy name is great in might." Indeed his *name*

is the strength and salvation of his people; none can *run into his name*, or be gathered into it, or baptized into it, but they must at the same time be gathered and baptized into *him*.—Hence the scripture phrase, “baptized *into Christ*,” and hence also the absolute certainty that where two or three are gathered *into his name*, there he *is* in the midst of them. See Mat. xviii. 20. He doth not simply promise that he *will be*; he declares “there *am I* in the midst of them;” for he knew none could gather *into his name*, where he himself was not. The Greek word, truly translated, is *into*; the same word used in Christ’s baptismal commission, and with great propriety; for none can be gathered *into him* who are not *baptized into him*—neither gathering in his name, nor baptism in it, professionally, availeth.—The promise of salvation is sure to none but those who are truly gathered and baptized *into the name itself*; and to these it cannot fail; for the *name* has all healing virtue in it. “Holy Father” (says Christ) “keep through thine own *name* those whom thou hast given me that they may be *one*, as we are,” John xvii. 11. “While I was with them in the world, I kept them *in thy name*,” 12. “If ye shall ask any thing” (says he) “in my name, I will do it,” xiv. 14. This can never fail, any more than salvation can fail to such as are truly and thoroughly baptized *into his name*; for as this baptism is salvation, so asking in his name is in his *own life*, spirit and power, and he cannot deny himself. As the Father always bears *him*, because his asking is in the Father’s life and power; so *he* always hears, and cannot avoid hearing, *all* who ask *in his name*;

for the one plain and all-sufficient reason, that his *name* is his life and spirit his power and presence; and *all* done *in* it, is done to purpose; for therein there is no lack—therein is *fulness*, and divine sufficiency. We are complete therein forever, without any of the signs or symbols of former dispensations.

CHAPTER VII.

Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Colossians written purposely to dissuade from attachment to shadowy ordinances. Circumcision, water baptism, &c. plainly superseded; and true Christians shewn to be *complete in Christ* without them. This the evident scope of these epistles. This chapter contains many quotations from, and remarks on them.

SEVERAL of the epistles seem to have been written on purpose to dissuade from attachment to and retention of the rituals of shadowy dispensations. Paul having his knowledge of Christ by immediate revelation, knew the dispensation of figurative institutions was ended; and that Christians viewing lifeless signs as gospel ordinances, must powerfully divert and detain them from the living, saving substance: hence he presingly invites to Christ, the life and substance, and warns against a continuance of ceremonials. —His epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, and a good deal of several others, are *full* to this purpose. Some troublesome persons had got in among the Galatians, insisting on circumcision, and the *rites* of the law; and had so influenced the believers, that this inspired Apostle vehemently expostulates with them for being so easily shaken from grace (of itself sufficient for all) and turned to elementary observances, chap. i. 6, 7. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the *grace of Christ*, unto

another gospel." But as rituals are not of the gospel, he immediately adds, "which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."—Indeed every attempt to establish ceremonial institutions as gospel ordinances, is directly an attempt to pervert the gospel, and frustrate its blessed design, that of superceding all those figurative observations. And on this ground he pronounces any one, even though it were himself and companions, or an angel from heaven, that should preach any other gospel than that already preached unto them, accursed, v. 18.—The gospel that Paul preached, was *Christ within, the word nigh in the heart and in the mouth*; which he expressly calls the righteousness which is of faith; and declares of this *inward word*, "that is, the word of faith which *we preach*." See Rom. x. 6, 8.—A few words before he had declared, "Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth." Hence it is evident, that this *inward word* of faith, which he preached as nigh in the heart, &c. is that which supercedes and ends the signs and shadows of the law to true believers.

The Israelites had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God's righteousness (the inward righteousness of faith—Christ, the word in the heart) and going about to establish their own righteousness (in the figurative observances, the letter and ceremonies of the law, and creaturely performances) have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." See v. 2, 3. That he

means by the *righteousness of God*, this inward living word in the heart, and by their not submitting to it, their non-subjection to the motions and teachings of it, is evident by the 6th, 7th and 8th verses. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise; say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring *Christ* down from above:) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up *Christ* again from the dead) but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach." This will remain, through all ages, the one and only gospel of life and salvation. It is *Christ* in man, and ends the types and shadows. Were it not *Christ* himself the divine and holy word in the soul, did it not unite the life of the soul with the life of God, and bring into subjection to him, dependence upon him, and action by him, it would never effect complete salvation; for until all this is witnessed, God becomes not our "all in all." Though we have known *Christ* after the flesh (saith the Apostle) yet now henceforth know we him no more," 2 Cor. v. 16.—It was necessary he went away, as to his visible appearance in the flesh, that he might come again, or more fully in spirit abide with and comfort his forever. This he promised, and performs it to every true believer, who rightly looks for him in spirit, not gazing up into heaven, watching for his outward coming, or seeking to know him after the *flesh*: unto all who thus inwardly look for him, he appears in them, where his *kingdom* is "without sin to salvation." See Heb. ix. 28. This final coming to judg-

ment will be to thousands who *look not* for him, and will not be unto their *salvation*, but condemnation, to their shame and everlasting confusion; but his *second* coming is promised only unto them that look for him, and is to their *salvation*. And thus he did come to those he said should not taste of death till they *saw* the kingdom; for this is truly the coming of his kingdom on *earth*, to those who rightly *wait* and pray for it, and livingly experience it, which many *then* did; for, says the Apostle, Col. i 13, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us *into* the kingdom of his dear Son." Here Christ sitteth on the throne of the heart, in his inward kingdom; for Paul tells the Galatians that it had pleased God, who called him by his grace, "to reveal his Son in *him*." This entirely supercedes the occasion of signs, as *eating, drinking*, or the like, to keep him in remembrance. This inward revelation and knowledge of the Son, *in man*, the *hope* of his *glory*, was a mystery that had been hidden from ages and generations.—The mists of darkness, and their resting in the law of carnal commandments and ceremonies, had *hid* and *veiled* from their minds the clear knowledge of it: but the *vail* being *done away in Christ* to the saints, in that day, the Apostle declares this mystery was "made manifest to" them;—and goes on to shew what is the very life, riches and glory of it; saying, "to whom God would make known what is the *riches* of the *glory* of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." See Col. i. 26, 27. There never was but one true *life* and *substance*

of religion.—Hence though this mystery of Christ within was greatly hid to most men for ages, yet was it the very thing Moses referred Israel to of old. Deut. xxx. 14, “the *word* is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” Here Moses preached the gospel: and Paul affirms it was preached to Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. Indeed it must be so; for Abraham saw Christ’s day, rejoiced in it, and came in degree into the life of it, though not to the end of all the signs.—He not only saw it, as *then* to come in greater fullness and glory; he knew it in himself; for when the Jews said to Christ, “thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” he did not escape their dilemma by telling them, Abraham *foresaw* his day *afar off*. That was not the thing he aimed at: but he came directly to the ever important point, to the very *life* of the matter; “verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, *I am*,” John viii. 57, 58: not *I was*; for, as the holy *word* (the same that appears in the heart) he is the eternal *am*.—Abraham knew and enjoyed him as *such*, as the life and substance of the new covenant, “four hundred and thirty years” before the giving of the outward law.—This is the inward gospel which Paul learned by the revelation of Jesus Christ, Gal. i. 12.—by God’s revealing his Son *in* him: had he not so learned it, but only taken it by report from others, though well authenticated, he might have preached up Jesus and the *resurrection* in word, with as much zeal as ever he had in the Jews’ religion, while he was so “exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his

fathers," v. 14, and yet never at all have preached the *gospel* of Christ, which ever is in itself (and is never preached but in) the power of God to salvation.

I mourn that the preachers of our day so generally lay hold of the history of the gospel in the *letter*, out of the *life* and *power* of it—zealously urging and using elementary observances, as ordinances of Christ, to the subversion of many souls from a close and *single* attention to the inward word of life; under which, for a season, they have been well exercised. Thus "the letter killeth," 2 Cor. iii. 6. The *literal* preaching of what is called the gospel, being out of the *newness* of life, leading into and landing in the ceremonials of religion, has *slain its tens of thousands*, even of such as have in degree begun in the Spirit, and run well for a season; but by and by, through the influence of this lifeless ministry, have turned to and come under the *shadows*, and there rested from the further pursuit of their journey *in the Spirit*, which they ought to have fervently prosecuted in the open light, and under the *warmth* and animating *beams of the sun*. Paul knew the danger of these things, and considered the attempts of those "false brethren" to continue the observance of outward ordinances, as directly tending to bring the believers "into bondage," Gal. ii. 4, and would not *give place* to them, "by subjection" (to such observances) "no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel" (says he) "might continue with you," v. 5. By the *truth of the gospel*, he means its pure and genuine simplicity, unfettered with

signs and ceremonies; against the *retention* whereof he was so *bold and faithful*, that he declares he even *withstood* Peter "to the face," at Antioch, v. 11, and reprov'd him "before them all," for compelling "the Gentiles to live as do the Jews," 14; and especially, seeing he himself had, "before that certain came from James," eaten with, and lived "after the manner of the Gentiles."

And then this great Apostle pertinently inculcates, that even the believing *Jews* themselves could not be "justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," 16. It is evident he means, by the *works of the law*, the outward observances of it; for he is *here* expressly labouring against the continuance of *these*, as will yet further appear. The 3d chapter begins thus, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" The 2d and 3d verses query, "this only would I learn of you, received ye the *Spirit* by the *works* of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having *begun* in the *Spirit*, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" All true religion, in every age and nation, ever *began in the Spirit*; and all that ever continued in true religion, *continued* in the Spirit: and no man ever enjoyed *any more* of it than he *enjoyed* in the *Spirit*. None ever were, or ever will be "made perfect by the flesh;" by any thing man, as man, can do; nor receive the *Spirit* by the *works and observations of the law*; though many are acting as if they thought they could not be *complete* in Christ *alone*, or be "made per-

fect" in and by his holy *Spirit*, without the addition of "weak and beggarly elements." It seems the Galatians were of the same mind.— They *began in the Spirit*, but not being content to *abide* in it, *advance* forward in it, and depend singly upon it, they were seeking to be "made perfect," or *completed* in the work of religion, by ceremonial observations. Against this departure from a single reliance on that holy Spirit which *began* the work, the Apostle was zealously engaged, and declares, v. 11, "the just shall live by faith." What faith? The righteousness of that inward word of faith, which Paul *preached* "nigh in the heart and mouth." For there never was nor can be but *one* thing, thro' all time, that the *just* could or ever can *live by*; and that is this inward *word of life*, the *spiritual* flesh and blood of Christ. "He that eateth me, even he shall *live* by me," saith the blessed Jesus, John vi. 57; and he that eateth him *not* truly and substantially (how oft soever he eats the *figures*, and how loud soever he proclaims his faith) has "no life in him," 53. This is the *tree of life*, in the "midst of the paradise of God." This heals the nations of them that walk in the light of the Lamb; and by this, and this *only*, they *live unto God*. Hence Paul says, "I live, yet not I, but *Christ* liveth *in me*; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20; that is, by the faith of *Christ living in him*. He was "dead to the law, that he might live unto God," 19. He renounces all mere legal, ceremonial righteousness, and comes home to *Christ* alive in his *own soul*. He mentions the "*blessing of Abra-*

ham" as coming "on the *Gentiles*" only through "Jesus Christ" the life; and the receiving of "the promise of the Spirit," only "through faith," chap. iii. 14. This is *experimental* religion, *all* standing in that *faith* which is "of the operation of God" in the soul, Col. ii. 12, and which is the very *life* and "substance of things hoped for," and therefore, and therefore only, it is also the sure and certain "evidence of things not seen." See Heb. xi. 1. Many strive hard to *believe*, and think they *do* believe; but no mere opinion, or simple credence, is the *faith* of the Gospel. No *other* faith than that which is in its own *nature* the very "substance of things hoped for," can be a *sure* and *unshaken* evidence of the eternal inheritance, the things not yet seen.

"To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of *many*; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is *Christ*. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed *before* of God in *Christ*, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years *after*, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect," Gal. iii. 16, 17. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," 29. Observe, reader, the *covenant* is confirmed only in *Christ*, the *life*, the *word* in the *heart*, the inward "hope of glory." The *promise* is to all that are *Christ's*, and to them *only*. God promised that in Abraham, and in his seed, *Christ*, all nations should be blessed. This "promise is sure to *all* the seed;" see Rom.

iv. 16; to *all* that are "born again of God," begotten into *son-ship* and *joint* heir-ship *with Christ* by this "incorruptible *seed*, and *word* of God," in the heart. This alone is the *true faith*, wherein all the children of it "are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 9. It runs not in the outward blood, nor in the line of faith merely professional. It was never obtained by the observance of rituals; nor is it known but by a real baptism into *death* with Christ, and arising with him in the newness of life. "For if there had been a law given, which could have given *life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law," v. 21. But as nothing can give *divine life* to the soul, but that which brings it into the *life of the Son*, or the state of real *son-ship*, by the *union* of the soul with the *life* of the *holy word*; and as all thus begotten and born of God, *feel* their dependence to be wholly on God their *Father*; their looking is wholly unto him for aid and protection. Hence this great Apostle, chap. iv. v. 6, of this epistle, declares, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." *Here* is the alone true life of faith in the soul. Here is divine reliance upon the Father. It is in the state of real *sonship*, the *Emanuel* state, where *God* and *man* unite in the heavenly fellowship, and substantial relationship. This is beyond all figurative observations. "The law made nothing perfect," but "was added because of transgressions."—But for how long? "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made," chap. iii. 19, But if the law was added, *because of transgressions*, till the seed came, and John, the forerunner,

to prepare his way, declares the axe must be laid to the *root* of the corrupt trees, till they are all "hewn down, and cast into the *fire*," and that the chaff must be *burned up*, and the floor *thoroughly cleansed*; how idle is it, for any to think of salvation by Christ, and that they are not *under the law*, but under *grace*, because they *assent* to the *history* of the gospel, and *say* they believe in Jesus, whilst living a *life of sin*, and continuing in *transgression*, the very thing for which "the law was added," and which the life, strength and authority of the moral precepts of it were and will be *over*, and therefore *over men*, so far as in *transgression*, and sensible of it; and so far they are and ever will be under the *law*, and not under the dominion and government of *grace*. For *grace saveth*; and just so far as we are *under it*, we are saved *from sin*; and so far as we are *not* saved from sin, we are not *under grace*. Christ never saves a soul *in sin*. Indeed, in the complete sense of the word salvation, he cannot. It is a contradiction in itself. It would be *saved*, and *not* saved. For salvation is *from sin*. Therefore it is said, "thou shalt call his name Jesus" (that is a saviour) "for he shall save his people *from* their sins," Mat. i. 21. The whole scope of the gospel is salvation *from sin*, and a *new life in holiness*, really and inherently so; not merely imputatively. Mere imputation of Christ's righteousness, without the implantation of it, is a dangerous doctrine, indeed a real impossibility. Christ redeems from the *shadows* of the *law*, by bringing and uniting the soul to the *substance*; and that may be the main reason why so few professed Christians are

yet redeemed from them; for none are any further *truly* redeemed, even from the *shadows*, than they are so by the *life* and possession of the *substance*. For as "circumcision is nothing," so simple "uncircumcision is nothing." But the *living faith*, the *new creature*, the *substance*, is all in all. Many think much of themselves, because they are baptized in water, partake of the bread and wine, &c. And many think much of themselves because they *avoid* them, and suppose they see *beyond* them. But if even the *latter* is only a speculative or merely rational convincement, *it is nothing*: it is not the true and living redemption of Christ "from the rudiments of the world;" for that never advances further or faster in any soul, than the soul advances in the knowledge and enjoyment of the substance. It is Christ *himself*, the *seed*, the *life*, the *substance*, that is the *end of the law*. And so, as none are truly redeemed from the *shadows* of it, but *by* and *in* the substance; so none are redeemed from the *curse* of it, the penalty due for the *transgression* of its moral precepts, *until*, nor a whit *further* than, they know Christ, the *seed*, the substance, to *finish sin*, and make an end of *transgression* in them individually. For this is the only real destruction of the works of the devil, that Christ ever makes; and consequently, all the redemption from the curse, or penalty of the law, that men ever really do know—save the forgiveness and remission of sins already committed, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. *So far*, therefore, as we sin against God, we are *not* under *grace*, but at best under the *law*. Nor shall ever "one jot, or one tittle,

pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." If any soul is not under the *curse* of it, but under grace, it is because Christ, the *seed*, redeems and preserves him from the state of *transgression*, on account of which it was *added*. And yet salvation is in no wise by the *deeds* of the law, but by *Christ*, who redeems, and *liveth in us*, and is our *life*, above and *beyond* the law. "Is the law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid," says the Apostle, Gal. iii. 21. "But before *faith* came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be *revealed*," 23. Before the *word of faith* is *revealed* in the *heart*, before the *Son of God* is revealed in men, as God *revealed* him in Paul, the law serves as a *school-master*; hence the Apostle's very next words, verse 24, are, "wherefore the law was our school-master, to bring us unto *Christ*, that we might be justified by faith." Faith being the *substance*, as before shewn, "of things hoped for;" and being "of the operation of God" in man, the *word* nigh in the *heart*, which is the word of faith the Apostles *preached*; when this was livingly known, in dominion over all in the soul, the use of the *school-master* was superceded: and this is the substantial *experience* of such as are *risen* with Christ, *above* the *rudiments* of the world, and the law of carnal commandments, in every age of the world. So the Apostle's next words are, v. 25, &c. "but after that *faith* is come, we are no longer under a school-master. For ye are all the *children* of God, by *faith* in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Here the law is *fulfilled*, in putting "on the Lord Jesus

Christ,"—"the whole armour of light;" casting "off the works of darkness," and making "no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," according to Rom. xiii. 12, 14. Well may this supercede the *law*, seeing this baptism *into Christ*, this *putting him on*, as the *whole armour of light*, so effectually redeems from the *works of darkness*, and the *lusts of the flesh*; agreeably also to Eph. vi. 11, "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Some will understand this baptism *into Christ*, to mean *outward* baptism. The author of the aforesaid "plain account" quotes Bishop Burnett, describing the *primitive baptism in water*, and saying, "from whence came the phrases of being baptized into Christ's death; of being *buried with him by baptism into death*; of our being *risen with Christ*; and of our *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*: of *putting off the old man*, and *putting on the new*?" page 30. Thus men by attachment to *rituals*, are liable to have their minds *veiled*, from beholding the obviously inward and spiritual meaning of scripture, or at least turned to seek or suppose an outward signification, where none seems necessary or intended, but that which centers in the life and substance. Baptism *into Christ*, is *into the name*, the *power* and *influence* of the Divinity, according to the commission. It is not true, that all who are baptized in *water*, "have put on Christ;" but only such as are actually baptized *into Christ himself*, the divine eternal substance; and therefore the Apostle limits it to *such only*, by the words, "as many of us."

Those who hold water baptism an essential, or as that which *saves*, or as the "one baptism," I suppose, hold that all the believers received it: but Paul speaks *here* of only *as many* as were absolutely baptized *into Christ*, not *into water*, verbally in his name, but *into him*, so as to *put him on*, by putting on his nature, life and disposition; love, meekness, temperance, and all those virtues predominant in such in whom *he* lives and reigns, and against whom there is therefore no law: for it is by *thus* putting on Christ, and living *in him*, and *he in us*, our *life*, and hope of glory, in that wherein there is no *transgression*, that we are redeemed from the bondage, penalty and rudiments of the *law*, into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." This is the *one* gospel baptism. It is strictly *into Christ*, *into the name*, the *saving name* of the *Lord*, the *strong tower* of salvation and *safety*, the *name* that is as *ointment poured forth*; the saving healing influences whereof make all the sincere *virgins love him*. The *same* baptism, with the *same* word *into*, several times repeated, the Apostle again mentions Rom. vi. 3, 4. "So many of us," and he might have said *only* so many, and doubtless meant so, "as were baptized *into Jesus Christ*, were baptized *into his death*." Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." Now see the fruits of it, which cannot result from baptism *into water*; "that like as Christ was raised up *from the dead*, by the glory of the Father, even so *we also* should walk in *newness of life*;" and, verse 5, "for if we have been planted together in the *likeness* of his death" (that is, into a real death to *all sin*, for his baptism *thoroughly cleanses the floor* of the

heart) "we shall be also in the *likeness of his resurrection*." This is what the Apostle means by *walking in newness of life*; as is plain by the connexion, "for if," &c. Can any thing be plainer, than that this is all an inward and spiritual work; an actual baptism into real death unto sin, and arising into life with Christ (who then *liveth in us*) in his inward resurrection and glory in the soul? And hence the *baptism that now saves us*, not the putting away the filth of the outward flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, is rightly, and ever with divine propriety, said to be "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." And now, to evince that this is all *inward*, and that this of being "planted together in the likeness of his death," in baptism, is not being dipped *into water*, but into a real death to sin; let us observe well, that the Apostle declares positively, without any exception, that if we have been so planted "into the likeness of his death, we *shall be* also in the likeness of his resurrection," which certainly is not true of all that are baptized in *water*, though they may call that "the likeness of his death." For many have been *so* baptized, who have had no experience of this likeness of his resurrection, this walking in *newness of life*. Simon the sorcerer both *believed* (see how little a mere lifeless believing amounts to) and was *so baptized*; and yet he was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; having neither part nor lot in the true Christian baptism, Acts viii. 13, 21, 23: which shews plainly, that our blessed Saviour's words in the commission, Mark xvi. 16, "he that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved," relate

wholly to that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and to that baptism which is truly into the likeness of Christ's death, into death unto sin, and a new life unto holiness, by the resurrection and the life of Christ in us, the hope of glory. And as this in Mark, is the same commission with that in Matthew, it further confirms that the baptism mentioned in both is that which is *saving*, and could not be that of *water*; since the promise is to him that *believeth*, and is *baptized* with it, that he "*shall be saved*." This promise is *sure*, for this baptism is *into the name* of the Lord, the *strong tower*, in which the righteous abiding, ever find *safety*, defence and preservation: while a bare dipping in water, professionally in the name, preserves none from evil.

But further, that Paul *meant* as above explained, by this *planting*, *death*, *burial* and *resurrection*, his very next words *declare*, v. 6, "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."—This is the *death* produced by the *fiery* baptism of Jesus, the *crucifixion* of our *old corrupt man*, the destruction of the *body of sin* in us. And is it not strange, that any real Christian should not understand this, seeing it is the very thing which John the Baptist (in direct contradistinction to the baptism of *water*) declares of *Christ's*, by the mention of the *axe*, *fan*, and *fire*, and the work *effected* by them, amounting to absolute purification? May these things be well laid to heart, by all who hope to be saved by a simple though hearty and sincere belief of facts, and

immersion in outward water; for this is not the *faith* and the *baptism* to which the promise of salvation holds good forever. And for any to use *water* as *gospel baptism*, and *not* consider it *saving*, is to run counter to the design and express declaration of scripture in regard to the baptism of Jesus.

The fourth chapter to the Galatians begins asserting, "that the *heir*, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.— Even so *we*, when we were children, were in bondage under the *elements* of the world," v. 1, 2, 3. Here we see the Son himself submitted to the *elements*, the *signs* and *ceremonials*, unto which also the children were in *bondage* for a season; and to prevent their continuance *under which*, the Apostle was now zealously endeavouring, having seen clearly beyond them himself, and been a living witness of their abolition. By the next verses, it is clear, that Christ's submitting to these elementary things, and being *made under the law*, was so far from perpetuating outward, *elementary* baptism, or any other rituals, that it was purposely "to redeem them that were under the law." Why then should *we*, who never were under that law of carnal ordinances, nor yet under the dispensation of John's baptism (which was for Christ's manifestation to *Israel*) unless by our own voluntary act, desire to come into *bondage* to these things, called here by Paul "the elements of the world?" Those *outward* things were abundantly proved

weak and insufficient, or the law under which they were enforced, had remained to enforce them still. All *figurative* immersions, sprinklings, eatings and drinkings, are altogether as *weak*, insufficient and unavailing, *now*, as *ever* they were; and it is an evidence of human *weakness* to continue in, and desire to be in *bondage to them*; as much so, as was the attachment of the Galatians to *circumcision*, &c. Paul, thoroughly convinced of this *weakness* of all mere *signs* and *symbolical* observations, therefore pertinently, and as it were with amazement, queries, v. 9. "how turn ye again to the *weak* and beggarly *elements*, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" 10, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." 11, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." And how many *days* and *times* are now *appointed*, and rigidly *observed*, even in our days? Set times and seasons, in man's will and wisdom, for fasting, prayers, thanksgivings, eating bread, and drinking wine, &c. And how much further a punctual conformity and observance in these things, often goes towards conciliating the favour of men, and even of princes, than purity of life, integrity of conduct, and humanity towards all ranks of mankind, deserves serious consideration. And is it at all strange, that Paul, observing how great weight these *weak* things were obtaining, even among such as had really "known God," v. 9. (and who *therefore* had received that which was all-sufficient in itself, if *lived in*, and relied *singly* on, for salvation, and eternal life, without any *elementary* observations whatever) was really

alarmed, and *afraid* lest his labours to establish them in the purity and truth of the gospel should prove *in vain*? especially when those who had lately almost adored him, were so *soon* and so *far* infected with this *zeal* for ceremonials, as to give grounds for his query, v. 16, “am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Is it strange, that he calls the *retrograde* motion of such as had “known God” for themselves, from that *inward knowledge* to *outward rites*, turning “again to the *weak* and *beggarly elements*?” In the next verse, 17, speaking of those who strove to bring them into this bondage to the *elements*, he says, “they zealously affect you, but not *well*; yea, they would *exclude* you, that ye might affect them.” They were very *zealous* in their attempts to *embondage* them to the *elements*, as too many now are; but this *zeal* was not *well*, but very *ill*; for they went so far, it seems, as to attempt or desire to *exclude* such as were backward to *conform*, and come into this *bondage*, that by this *exclusion* they might be driven or prevailed on to *affect* them, or their doctrines and notions. This their *zeal* and *labour* was quite different from *Paul’s*. He was for the *life*; they, the *letter*. He for the *ubstance*; they, the *symbols*. Do but hear him, v. 19, “my little children, of whom I *travail* in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.” He knew the “*letter killeth*,” and that *zeal* in the *sign* often obstructs the growth and formation of *Christ*, the *substance*, in the soul: so he *travails* as it were in birth again for their advancement and perfection in the latter. It would seem, by their being truly his “little

children," and by his *now* travailling in birth *again*, that is, for the more *complete* growth and full *formation* of Christ *in* them, that they had been already in degree truly begotten and born of God: and that the Apostle, in the labour he had before bestowed upon them, had already *once* travailed, as in birth *for* and *with* them; but that they, instead of rightly advancing in the *travail*, growth and full *formation* of Christ in themselves, unto the state of perfect men in him, "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" had been obstructed and diverted therefrom, by turning to the weak and beggarly elements;" and that therefore such was the Apostle's good will to them, he was now *again* engaged in *travail* for their attainment of what was lacking in them; the complete *formation* and growth of Christ, whose *growth* and *increase of stature* in *man* is gradual and progressive; as was the case in that prepared body, wherein he grew, and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man," Luke ii. 52. And, to win them wholly to *Christ*, and wean them from *beggarly elements*, Paul reasons with them in the following verses, from Abraham's *two* sons, "the one by a *bond-maid* (representing this *elementary bondage*) the *other* by a free woman, Gal. iv. 22: the first "was born after the flesh," the last "by promise," 23: "which things" (saith he) "are an allegory; for these are the *two* covenants; the *one* from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to *bondage*, which is Agar," 24. "For this Agar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem,

which now is, and is in *bondage* with her children," 25. "But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all," 26. And the few following verses declare believers to be, with Isaac, "children of the promise;" that the children of the flesh persecute *these* as *Ishmael* did *Isaac*; that the *son* of the *bond-woman* was *cast out*, "for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free." And immediately upon these words the chapter concludes, "so then, brethren, we are *not* children of the bond-woman, but of the free." And the next very pertinently begins, "stand fast, therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Then instancing one particular *rite*, he declares, "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing;" that such as are so, are *debtors to do the whole law*; that Christ is become of *no effect* to those who seek to be "justified by the law;" and positively asserts of them, "ye are fallen from grace."

Little do the zealous advocates for outward ordinances think how their attachment thereto hinders their *real* justification, by the true and living *faith* and *grace* of the gospel, even amidst all their talk of *justification*, by faith in Christ *alone*. Perhaps they never consider that these *foolish Galatians*, with all their desires of bondage to the beggarly elements, might be as loud in profession of faith in Christ, and in their claim to justification by his blood, as any *now* are. I desire to know (if it is so) why it is more impossible for a man *circumcised* to be profited

by *Christ*, or why he is any more fallen from *grace*, than a man *baptized in water*. I cannot perceive that either circumcision or baptism prevents profit by *Christ*, any further than the mind is thereby turned from *him*, and from a single reliance upon the work of his *grace* in the *heart* for *salvation*; nor that either the one or the other, or any other outward performance, will ever fail to prevent it, so far as the mind is thereby turned away from an inward attention unto and firm dependence upon him who remains to be the resurrection and the life, in all true believers, the word nigh in the heart and mouth, for counsel, direction and salvation. In so far as *any* ceremonial diverts the mind of one that has truly “known God” in *himself*, from attention to his inward appearance and work in the heart, such an one is so far “*fallen from grace*,” and no further, than he is so diverted. And I can see nothing in *circumcision* a whit more likely so to divert him, than in *water baptism*. One, as far as I can conceive, is just as likely to keep him from *Christ*, as the *other*. This may seem strange to many. But I think they can give no sound reason why one should be so hurtful, and the other so harmless, as they may imagine.—Distinctions, however ill founded, when long settled in idea, seem *real*; but examined to the bottom, are found to have no existence but in speculation. And believing many distinctions of long standing among Christian professors are of this kind, I think I can truly say, I travail in *spirit*, if not in *birth*, for them, that they may dig deep for the foundation, and build on the sure rock of ages. Then their buildings will

not fall, but stand all winds and weathers. It is much better patiently, with Paul (v. 5.)—"through the *Spirit* to wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," than hastily to rush into *bondage*, v. 7. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?" 8. "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you," 9. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." This I firmly believe is just the case with many, whom the Lord in these days calls, by his holy Spirit working in them. They give up to the call; *begin* like the Galatians, in the *Spirit*; run well for a season. By and by, in steps the adversary of souls, or, by the art and address of some high in esteem with them; they are absolutely hindered from obeying the *truth*, in keeping singly to the *Spirit they began in*; and by a *persuasion* that *cometh not from him that called* and still calleth *them to persevere on in the Spirit*, they are diverted to the *elements*, take up a *false rest* in the *shadows*, and gradually, perhaps almost imperceptibly to themselves, depart from *Christ*, the inward life; and *fall away* from the lively influences of *grace* in their own souls, till the whole *lump* is leavened, with the leaven of the *Pharisees*; a fruitless, lifeless zeal in rituals, a round of creaturely devotions and performances; drawing near the Lord with the *mouth*, and seeming to honour him with the *lip*, while the *heart* is *far* from him. In order to prevent which, I think Paul's direction, v. 25, very pertinent and proper; "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. And so walking, I am persuaded lifeless *forms* will be forsaken, *beggarly elements*

abandoned, old *things* done away, all things become *new*, all things of *God*, in spirit and in *truth*, in the *newness* of divine life; for I can never believe, that the Spirit not only lived in, (as to what passeth in the secret of the soul) but also diligently and strictly walked in (as to all our outward religious or devotional exercises) will fail to *lead out of*, or preserve *from*, every undue attachment to signs and ceremonials, or any thing that *genders to bondage*.

Now, notwithstanding the length of these quotations from the epistle to the endangered Galatians, and of the foregoing remarks, I am not easy to omit several passages to the Colossians; the epistle to them also being pointedly against *subjection to ordinances*.

Paul was fervent in *spirit*, in *prayers* and *desires* for them, that they might be “fruitful in *every* good work;” *increasing* in the knowledge of God, and “filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding,” chap. i. 9, 10: but was so far from pointing out *water* baptism, or any other mere ceremonial, as promotive of this happy experience, as pertaining to fruitfulness in *every* good work, or as being included in the word *every* in this sentence, or at all belonging to those purely *spiritual* things, wherein he wished them an increased understanding; that he plainly points out the fulness and sufficiency of Christ, without them; and warns the Colossians of their danger of being beguiled with enticing *words* from the simplicity of the gospel. In leading on, and preparing

their minds for a *single* dependence on *Christ alone*, the *living substance*, and for the rejection of all that is *not* Christ, not *in* nor *of* his *life* in religion, he tells them it is *he*, v. 14, "in whom we have redemption:" that *he* is, v. 15, "the image of the invisible God;" yea, "the first born of every creature." 16, That "by *him* were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible." 17, "And *he* is before all things, and by *him* all things consist." 18, That "*he* is the head of the body, the church," that *he* is "the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things *he* might have the pre-eminence." And, 19, that "it pleased the Father, that in *him* should all fulness dwell." This was a good foundation; for having *him* actually living *in* us, in whom *all fulness dwells*, and *he* being truly our *life*, we need no addition of ceremonials. Therefore the Apostle, drawing on, v. 23, towards the substance, which he wishes them to *continue* "grounded and settled" in the *faith* of, not being "moved from the *hope* of the gospel," he comes, 26, 27, 28, to the very thing itself; "the mystery which hath been held from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints. To whom God would make known what is the *riches* of the *glory* of this mystery among the Gentiles;" which he expressly says (as before noted) "is Christ *in* you, the *hope* of glory; whom we preach, warning every man," &c.

Observe, reader, we before saw that "the word of faith, which the Apostles preached," was the "word nigh in the mouth, and in the

heart," as Paul plainly testifies, Rom. x. 8. And here, in full confirmation of the same great truth, the same gospel of salvation, we find the same Apostle declares the *Christ*, the *gospel*, yea, the very "*riches of the glory of this mystery*," of life and salvation, "among the Gentiles," which they the Apostles *preached*, "is Christ in you the hope of glory." This is that "*hope of the gospel*," which a few verses before he wished they might not be "moved away from." And to keep them *to this*, and *from* ritual observances, his labour was fervent among them, "striving according" to the working of Christ in him, "which" (saith he, v. 29) "worketh in me mightily." And this his fervent *labour* and *striving* with them, preaching "Christ in them" as the substantial *hope of glory*, "warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom," was expressly in order, 28, to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;" where all perfection in the divine life centres; where *God* and *man* are reconciled in the heavenly *union*; where "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;" and *signs* are superceded. This was Paul's aim, his scope and exercise, in this epistle. In the beginning of the next chapter, he manifests great *care* or *conflict* for them, that "their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery," (he had spoken of) "of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom (says he) "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Thus he lays, or proposes, a *sure* foundation, on the all-sufficiency whereon both he and they might

safely depend; and that without *aid* or *addition* from things which may and *must* be *shaken*, in order that that *alone* which *cannot* be *shaken* may *remain*. For this *alone* is to remain in the *fulness* of the *gospel state*; and surely no ceremonies are things which *cannot* be shaken.—That this was Paul's aim, in the foregoing expressions, I think we have his own authority to declare; for his next words are, v. 4, “and this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.” And v. 6, he exhorts, “as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.” 7, “Rooted and built up *in him*, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” And then comes on pointedly to *warn* them, and shew them the danger of trusting or being drawn away to any thing else but the *riches*, *glory* and *sufficiency* of the great mystery, wherein was *all fulness* for salvation: “beware” (says he, v. 8) “lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (in the margin, *elements*) of the world, and not after Christ.” Oh! the mischief of human philosophy, carnal reasonings, vain deceit, and the wisdom of this world, in the things of religion. It builds tabernacles for abolished ordinances, and leads thousands from Christ to the *rudiments* of the world; thereby *spoiling* them, as to the increase of knowledge and stability in *Christ*, who is all-sufficient for and in his people; as the next words emphatically declare, v. 9, 10, “for in him dwelleth all the *fulness* of the Godhead bodily. And ye are *complete* in him, which is the head of all principality and

power." The next verses shew, that neither *circumcision* nor outward *baptism* is at *all* necessary; so entirely *complete* are we in Christ, the inward and everlasting *fulness* and divine sufficiency. Do but read them. "In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, *wherein* also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the *operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened, together with him; having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." What could *Christ* have *done*, or *Paul* have *said*, more fully to have shewn the abolition of ordinances? Even that of *water baptism* is as plainly here expunged and superceded, as *circumcision*. And it is marvellous to me, that men of sense, as the author of the forementioned "plain account," &c. with divers others, should be so *veiled* in their understandings, as to adduce this passage, and several more of somewhat a like import, in support of *water baptism*; when the *manner* of the Apostle's bringing it in, just after warning them against the *rudiments* of the world, pointing out the *fulness* of Christ, the inward hope of glory, and declaring them *complete in him*, and then immediately shewing *how* they are *complete in him*, without any of those *rudiments* he had just warned them against, shews as plainly as sunshine, that their *circumci-*

sion and their *baptism* were both *in him*, the *one* as much as the *other*. So that I desire the candid reader to turn to the passage, and read for himself. And I think he that can find argument in it for *water baptism*, may find *as much* for *circumcision* made with hands. But as the *circumcision here* is that made *without hands*, so also is the *baptism*. It is all *spiritual*; and, as the Apostle words it, consists "in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." Almost exactly similar is what he says, Rom. vi. 6, speaking expressly of this inward and spiritual *baptism* "into Christ," and "into his death," being "buried with him by baptism into death," &c. The words are, "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him; that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here the same Apostle ascribes the same effect to spiritual baptism *into Christ*, as in the passage just mentioned, in the epistle to the Colossians, he ascribes to *circumcision* spiritually *in him*, the "putting off" or "destroying the body of the sins of the flesh." It must be a wrong *philosophy*, and *vain deceit* indeed, that can so wrest these plain testimonies of the Apostle, as to draw *elementary water* from them for *baptism*.

If *circumcision here* is inward, so is the baptism. If the baptism is outward, so is the *circumcision*. They are so joined together, that neither true wisdom, sound reason, nor common sense, can put them *asunder*, and make the one outward, and the other inward. And if the Apostle *here* excludes outward *circum-*

cision, he equally excludes outward baptism. If he retains *one*, he retains both. But he retains neither. He clearly rejects *both*; and shews our *circumcision* and our baptism both *complete in Christ*, without *hands*, without a *knife*, or a single drop of *elementary water*. He plainly shews the believers not only "*buried with him in baptism*," but in the *same baptism* also "*risen with him*;" and that expressly "through the faith of the *operation* of God, which is wholly an *internal* thing, the very "*substance of things hoped for*." And having shewn what the *one* saving baptism and circumcision is, he then with great pertinency exhibits Christ "*blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances*," taking "*it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*," as of no further use to such as *know* him in the *fellowship* of his *sufferings*, and in the *power* of his *resurrection* such as experience his *fulness*, and are *circumcised, baptized, and complete in him*. For these know his *cross*, and are *crucified* by it to the *world*, and to the *rudiments, elements* and *ordinances* of it; and the world also is crucified *unto them*. There is no friendship between *Christ* and *Belial*; nor much between his *disciples* and the *world*. His religion does not suit the world. It is too simple, unpopular, unpompous, and too unceremonious; too much a death to self. And I am well satisfied that many, who are and have been livingly wrought upon by the power of God, and made to pant for divine support, have yet striven hard to save their *life in self*, in *popularity*, and in the *friendship of this world*; and from this disposition have *shunned the cross*; and though they have owned

Christ, and chose to be "called by his name, to take away their reproach," they have still preferred to *eat their own bread*, and *wear their own apparel*; and, with Nicodemus, to acknowledge and worship the blessed Jesus, in the dark signs and *shadows* of the night; than openly to embrace the *contempt* of the *cross*, and confess him in the inward, unceremonious purity, spirituality and simplicity of the clear and genuine *gospel day*. Dipping *under water*, and calling that "buried with him by baptism into death," the spirit of the world, which still too much liveth in them, can more easily endure; nay, is sometimes pleased and plumed with it. Far be it from me to think this of all who use this *sign*. I doubt not, even *this* is a real *cross* to some; but I believe it is generally much more tolerable to the spirit and wisdom of the world, than the pure simplicity of the gospel; the real *death* and *burial* with *Christ*, in *putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, and ceasing from man, and from their own creaturely activity in religion; waiting on God, in absolute dependence, in nothingness of self, and the loss of all things: this is *too hard* for the *spirit* of the world. These are hard sayings to it; *who* can bear them? Hence many who *walk with him* awhile in the *Spirit*, and *run well* for a season under the *cross*, grow weary of the *sufferings* and *reproaches of Christ*, turn away back, and *walk no more with him*; but get into the "beggary elements," and sit at ease in the friendship of the world, under a formal profession of religion; very little conversant with the *cross*, to which they would know all these things *nailed*, if they rightly

abode with Jesus, and followed him in the regeneration. But as none *reign* with him, but those who *suffer* with him; as none *rise* with him in the likeness of his resurrection, nor walk with him in *newness of life*, but those who are *really*, not ceremonially, *planted* with him in the likeness of his *death*; as none *sit with him* in the throne of his *kingdom* and *glory*, but who *drink* of his *cup*, and are *baptized* with *his baptism*; a remnant of true hearted followers have chosen to suffer affliction with him, and follow him wherever he leadeth, *bearing his cross*. These know "the hand-writing of ordinances nailed to it." Their *blotting out*, and *removal*, is a thing in familiar *experience* with them; not merely a matter of record in the *letter* of the *scriptures*, and thence gleaned up, and systematized into a lifeless creed, confession or profession of faith.

But let us follow the Apostle a little further. The next verse shews Christ having "spoiled principalities and powers," openly triumphing over them." Then he enjoins upon the Colossians, the way being now quite cleared for it "let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink" (are not the bread and wine *here* included, as we have seen circumcision and elementary baptism were a few verses before?) "or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath day." He goes very thorough in dismissal of ceremonials, and well he might; for his next words are, v. 17, "which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Therefore he adds, v. 18, &c. "let no man beguile you of your reward, in a volun-

tary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen; vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ *from the rudiments* of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to *ordinances*? Touch not, taste not, handle not which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men." He does not say, wherefore, if ye be *dead* and *buried* with Christ, by plunging into the *elements* or *rudiments* in *water baptism*; but, quite differently, "wherefore, if ye be *dead* with Christ, *from the rudiments*," or, as the marginal reading has it, "*from the elements* of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to *ordinances*?" This home query should go to the heart of every observer of these outward ordinances, and beget a close examination, whether their *observance* thereof, and *subjection* thereto, is not rather following after the traditions "and doctrines of men," in their *unseasonable* and *unprofitable* continuance in the *abrogated* institutions and ordinances of former dispensations—the *rudiments* which ought to be left *behind*, than *after Christ*, who has *triumphed* over them all, *abolished*, and nailed them to his cross? And when this examination is rightly made, and the Apostle's *prohibitory* injunction, "*touch not, taste not, handle not*, which all are to perish with the using," &c. *rightly* complied with, I believe the "weak and beggarly elements" must

be rejected ; bread, wine and water, as ordinances of religion, renounced, as things "which perish with the using;" and the *one* only and saving baptism of the gospel retained. Here the walking in newness of life, and the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, will be known. Here the earth will enjoy her sabbaths again, men resting from their *own* works, as God did from his. Here the morning stars will sing together, the sons of God will shout aloud for joy, and the inhabitants of Sion keep holy day to the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

Is a recapitulation or summary of a number of the principal reasons against supposing the Christian commission for baptism, Mat. xxviii. can mean water.

Thus having exhibited to the view of the reader many important passages of the sacred records, with many remarks and arguments thereon, which appear to me sufficient to satisfy the minds of such as may, under divine influence and illumination, carefully weigh and consider them, that the gospel is an inward, living and spiritual dispensation, void of any mere outward, figurative and ceremonial institutions, or ordinances; I think proper here, in one view, to recapitulate and present with several of the principal arguments, or reasons, why the great gospel commission, Mat. xxviii. Mark xvi. cannot be properly understood to enjoin water baptism.

I. Because every religious washing in outward water, both under John and Moses, was symbolical of inward purification, and pointed to it, as effected "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. John's ministry, and *water baptism*, in particular, was for Christ's manifestation to Israel. To *prepare his way*, by turning *their* minds to see the necessity, and to a desire and readiness for the reception

of, and submission to, this his baptismal purification; and then expressly to *decrease*, as the *substance* should *increase*. The *type* to give place to the *antitype*: seeing *signs* and *symbols* were ever intended to vanish out of the way, when the substance *signified* by them was fully come: they being only as a school-master, to lead *unto Christ*; who is, to every one that believeth in him, the full *end* of the *law* of commandments, contained in *ordinances*; because they are *complete in him*, without any of those representative observances, which only pointed *at* him, but can have no place *in* him, nor in his pure gospel dispensation.

II. Because the Greek word *en*, the common word for *in*, might have been used in the commission, as on other occasions, where *in* simply was intended, if *this* baptism had been only into water, verbally *in* the Lord's name. But the word *eis* being here used, signifying directly *into*, and so used in many other passages, shews the baptism is *into* the *name*, the virtue, life and power of God; into *holiness, meekness, purity, gentleness, divine wisdom, true judgment*, and whatever communicable grace or virtue a Christian receives by ingraftment *into* Christ, when "cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature; and grafted, contrary to nature, *into* a good olive tree," as Rom. xi. 24. The *ingraftment* is plainly *into* Christ. The *baptism* is several times expressly declared to be *into* him. Nor need we doubt but the common word for teach, to wit, *didasko*, would have been used in this commission, had it not meant a converting.

disciplining, baptizing kind of teaching, which gathers souls *into God*, their habitation, refuge, and strong tower.

III. Because the Apostles were not and could not be qualified to administer this baptism, till they were *endued with power from on high*: could not *impart, minister or communicate the Holy Ghost*, but *when and as they were baptized or filled with it themselves*. Hence were they commanded to *tarry at Jerusalem*, till qualified by the out-pouring of the *Spirit* upon them; and thus to wait for the *promise of the Father*, which they had heard of Christ, that "John baptized with *water*, but they should be baptized with the *Holy Ghost*." And it is very absurd to suppose Christ, in directing them how and where to wait, and what for, in order to their qualification to administer *his* baptism, would expressly point their attention *from and beyond* that of *water*, to that of the *Holy Ghost*, had he been then giving them directions about preaching the gospel, and baptizing in *water*.

IV. Because in all the after instances of baptism in water (through condescension) there is not *one*, wherein the form of words in this commission is made use of; which it must have been in *every* instance, where the commission was duly observed, had it meant water, and established a form of words to be used in its administration. And how can we suppose those, who *now* use water, *better know*, are more *bound by*, or more *duly observe* the commission, than the disciples? The disciples were so far from under-

standing it of *water*, that they never *once* used water, as under it; never once used the words of it, as a form in any wise proper to an *outward* or mere *figurative* performance. And does not this their *total* omission of those words evince that they were of an *high* and *heavenly* import, meaning nothing less than a real *baptism into the divine nature*, the very life and substance of the Godhead, and by no means applicable to the mere *outward and visible sign* of this *inward and spiritual* immersion, ingraftment and purification? But men *now* presume to apply these expressions to a mere outward ceremony, and dignify immersion in water, a most unstable element, with the title of a *gospel-ordinance*; yea, a sacrament of Christ Jesus.

V. Because when the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius, and his household, through Peter's speaking to them in the life and power of the same, he was immediately made to *remember* (doubtless by the great and promised *remembrancer*) the words of Christ respecting the *baptism* of the *Holy Ghost*. Thus clearly applying *them* to the *falling* of the Holy Ghost on those Gentiles, through his ministry; that is, through the *words* spoken by him, *whereby* they should be *saved*, as foretold by the angel. And as *only* the baptism of the Holy Ghost is *saving*; as they *did evidently* receive this *through* Peter's ministry; as the angel told Cornelius, Peter should tell him *words* by which they *should be saved*; and as Peter really understood the *baptism* they then received (through those *words* by him *spoken*, and by which they were to be *saved*) to be the *one sav-*

ing baptism of the gospel, the very same promised by Christ, in the words which were thereupon brought to his *remembrance*; it is evident the baptism of Christ is *only* inward. And more especially, as at this very time, in regard to the baptism of *water*, which was *John's* and was for Christ's manifestation to *Israel*, Peter so far doubted the propriety of its administration to the *Gentiles*, that he even appealed to the judgment of *men* about it (which how would he have dared to have done, had it been his *Lord's command*) and though none did forbid it, yet he *only* commanded them to be baptized *in the name of the Lord* (the Greek word here is *en*) and not *into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; these words in no wise suiting the nature and design of that outward administration.

VI. Because Peter not only never baptized *any* in water afterwards, that we have any account of, but expressly declares the *saving baptism*; both *negatively*, what it is *not*, to wit, "putting away the filth of the flesh," the proper effect of water; and *positively*, what it *is*, and *by* what it is *effected*; it *effects*, in its complete operation, such a *thorough* purification, as establishes in the soul the *answer of a good conscience towards God*, and is *effected by* that which *only can do this*, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ," the *light*, and *life*, and hope of glory *in us*. And it will forever be in vain for any to suppose they have received *Christian baptism*, unless they *thus* know him to be truly and experimentally "the resurrection and the life" *in themselves*; for this

alone can produce the true sanctification and baptism of the gospel. A *figure* cannot *save* us. All the washings in *water* are *figures*. And one figure is not the sign of *another figure*. Neither any of the divers Mosaic washings, nor John's immersion (being all *but figures*) pointed to the baptism of the gospel, as to an outward figurative plunging in water; but as (which in truth it is) to an *inward spiritual* washing, in the true *laver of regeneration*. And I think the old Mosaic *typical laver* might be as properly continued under the gospel, as sprinkling or dipping in water.

VII. Because Paul, a most eminent Apostle, not a whit behind the chiefest, and who received his commission and his knowledge of Christ by immediate revelation (God revealing his son *in* him) and thereby knew his will, and the true spiritual nature of his baptism; speaking of that with *water*, declares positively, that "Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel;" and even thanks God he had baptized no more; which would have been a high presumption, and misdemeanour, had he not known that baptism in *water* was no more an ordinance of Christ, than circumcision made with hands. But knowing the circumcision, and baptism of the new covenant, were altogether inward, he says, writing to the Colossians, "ye are *complete* in him, which is the head of all principality and power; *in* whom also ye are *circumcised* with the circumcision made *without hands*, in putting off the *body of the sins of the flesh*, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the

faith of the *operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead, chap. ii. 10, 11, 12; thus plainly rejecting both outward circumcision and baptism, the *one* as much as the *other*; and shewing that the *inward*, wherein they are *complete in Christ*, is a real putting off the body of sin, a *death* unto it, a real *burial* with Christ, and *rising* with him; which is so far from dipping under and rising out of the water, that it is *only* by a faith that is so *living*, and so much above all that is outward, and merely of man, that it is truly and powerfully of the very *operation of God in the soul*. Here is that resurrection of Christ, by which the good conscience is witnessed in Christian baptism. And having thus shewn *believers' baptism* to be as *entirely inward* as their *circumcision*, he immediately and very pertinently reminds them of Christ's "blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances," and taking "it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;" cautions them to let no man judge them in respect to those outward things, which are but "a shadow of things to come," and then roundly queries of them, "wherefore, if ye be *dead with Christ*, from the rudiments or elements of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances?" This shews, "dead with Christ," or *planted in the likeness of his death*, is not a burial *into* the rudiments, or elements, as in outward baptism, but "dead with Christ, *from* the rudiments;" therefore he immediately enjoins, "touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men." By all which we not only perceive his full rejection

of all the mere shadowy ordinances, but that he was so far from esteeming water baptism to be Christ's, that he was truly thankful to God that he had never used it, even in condescension, but in a very few instances; and that he considered the real baptism *into Christ* to include a *death* with him, *from* all those rudimentary or elementary things which *perish* with the *using*; and which, therefore, are not to be touched, tasted, or even handled, as ordinances, nor by any means subjected to, by those who are *dead to them* by baptism *into death with Christ*.

VIII. Because *all* those who truly *believe*, and in this faith *of the operation of God* are baptized according to the commission, are thereby *saved*, as promised by Christ, in *giving* the commission; which is *not* true of *all* who are baptized in *water*. Simon the sorcerer both *believed* and was *baptized*; and yet, at the same time, was so far from having any lot, part or portion in gospel *faith* or *baptism*, that he was in the very "gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity;" which no doubt has been the case with too many beside Simon; whereas all who are baptized according to the commission, and therein witness the *floor* of the heart *thoroughly cleansed*, are baptized *into Christ* have *put him on*, the "whole armour of light," and thus being planted in the likeness of his death, are alive in the likeness of his resurrection, in true newness of life.

IX. Because we have no account, nor the least reason to believe, the first Apostles were ever baptized in *water*, after John baptized them; for

“Jesus himself baptized not.” And we have heard of none else authorized to baptize them therein, but John; and so they being outwardly baptized *only* into John’s baptism, if Christ’s was *also* outward, and John’s was not it, they never *had* it. And then they would have been sent to baptize others with a baptism themselves never received. But they *received freely*, and were *freely* to *give*, and could not *give* what they never *received*, nor what they *did* receive, *before* they had received it: and therefore were under an absolute necessity to wait till they actually did receive the baptism of the *Holy Ghost*, before they possibly could baptize others with it. This they did receive, and this they did administer; and their not presuming, nor being allowed by their Lord, to attempt baptizing according to the commission, till first thus baptized themselves, shows evidently what the baptism of the commission was, and that the qualification for its administration was through the *same* baptism first received in themselves, the *endowment of power from on high*. But had the commission intended John’s baptism, *that* they were qualified to administer, and did administer *before*; had it intended *water*, and yet not *as John’s*, they never receiving it *after* the commission, any more than *before*, were no more qualified to *administer it* afterwards, than before. Hence it results, that Christ’s is that they *waited* for, received, and *then*, through the communications of it, administered to *others*; that is, the *one* baptism of the gospel.

X. Because whoever receive *Christ’s baptism*, are initiated thereby into the church of the first-

born, the pillar and ground of truth, and have their names written in heaven, have the white stone, and new name: and being *buried*, and *risen* with Christ, are *joint heirs with him*; and he is not ashamed to call them brethren, they in all things reverently ascribing to him the pre-eminence. But this is by no means true of all that are baptized into water. This is in substance somewhat the same as the 8th reason; but may serve to shew, that as baptism in water is not *saving*, so it never *initiates* any into the church of *Christ*, however it is extolled as an *initiatory ordinance*.

XI. Because Christ himself, though he was circumcised, baptized, &c. outwardly, in order to *fulfil*, terminate, *blot out*, and forever *disannul* all such ceremonials, never circumcised or baptized *others* outwardly; nor ever ordered any of the multitudes that believed on him, that we have any account of, to receive either. He even washed his disciples' *feet*, and taught them to wash one another's; but never baptized them in water, which we may venture to believe he would by no means have omitted, had it been his *own baptism*, the *one saving* and perpetual baptism of all true believers.

XII. Because he *did* baptize them with the holy Spirit, declaring he sent them *even as* his Father sent him; that is, anointed with the Holy Ghost, that they should do the *works* which he *did* (baptize with the Holy Ghost, besure, was a work which he did.) And as, in order to *qualify* them, he *breathed* on them, and bid

them *receive* the *Holy Ghost*, this was truly sending them *as* he was *sent*, and turning their minds, and fixing their dependence, on the *like* anointing, for qualification for the *like* services.

XIII. Because baptism in *water* is certainly one of the *old things*, one of the things that *can be shaken*; and not one that *remains*, when and where *all* are shaken and removed, that *can be shaken*; not one that *can* remain, when and where not only the *earth*, not only sin, carnality, and earthly mindedness, but *also* *heaven*; things esteemed heavenly, and which were once really ordinances of God, are thoroughly *shaken*, and *all removed*, but what *cannot be shaken*; and which *alone* can remain in this truly *gospel state*. The rejoicing of true Christians is in that which *God creates*, after the *old heavens* and *old earth* are shaken, and all typical righteousness is *passed away*; that is, in the pure *antitypical* righteousness which *must remain*, because it *cannot be shaken*, but is of the very *nature of*, and *pertaineth to* the *new heavens*, and *new earth*, wherein dwelleth righteousness, in its pure, uncumbered, unceremonious simplicity and beauty. The *elements* (these elementary, figurative observations) are known, in the truly *gospel state*, to *melt with fervent gospel heat*; whilst too many are retaining *these*, and expecting the outward material elements to be *melting* with outward material *fire*, at the end of this outward material *world*. Thus missing the marrow and substance of things, through the outwardness of their ideas and expectations.

XIV. Because it is certain, that it does please God to *save some* through the *foolishness of preaching*, to wit, such as truly *believe*. No soul can be *saved*, but according to God's mercy "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This is *Christ's baptism*. And hence it follows, that every soul *saved* through preaching, must thereby be *baptized* with the *Holy Ghost* and *fire*, or witness the regenerating, washing, and renewal of the Holy Ghost. For this being that without which none can be *saved*, it is idle to think of preaching, *saving*, or contributing towards the salvation of any, but through the work of this baptism. If preaching at any time contributes more or less to salvation, it certainly contributes, in the same degree, to this spiritual baptism. Thus Paul *begat* souls to God through the gospel. But no ministry, that is not *baptizing*, can ever do this. And this is the reason why they who *run* without God's *sending* and *qualification*, do not *profit the people*. They cannot baptize them *into the name* by all their arts of rhetoric, and powers of elocution. That is a work surpassing the utmost influence of all such unauthorised ministry, and effected instrumentally, by no other preaching than that which has its efficacy from the *power* received *from on high*. This even the Apostles were under an absolute necessity to *wait for*, and *receive* too, before they could thus *teach baptizing*. And the same necessity of waiting for the *same qualification* will remain, to all Christ's true ministers, to the world's end. Indeed the substance of the injunction, tarry at Jerusalem till you are endued, &c. rests now

with equal force on all who are equally observant of divine direction, in the work of the gospel. And to these Christ's words forever hold good, "he that receiveth *you*, receiveth *me*; and he that receiveth *me*, receiveth him that sent me," Mat. x. 40. They who truly receive Christ, receive his baptism. Hence none truly receive *his* ministers, and their ministry, but therein and therethrough they receive *him* and his *baptism*. This must hold good forever: they who truly receive him, *know it*. It would be as true, if it had never been so expressed. Experience would livingly confirm it. But they rejoice that this great truth is so clearly, and by so many modes of expression, established in the sacred records. And their prayers are sincerely and fervently to God, that seeking souls may be enabled to see, hear and believe it, to the salvation of their souls, in the saving operations of the one only soul-saving baptism of Jesus.

THE END.



